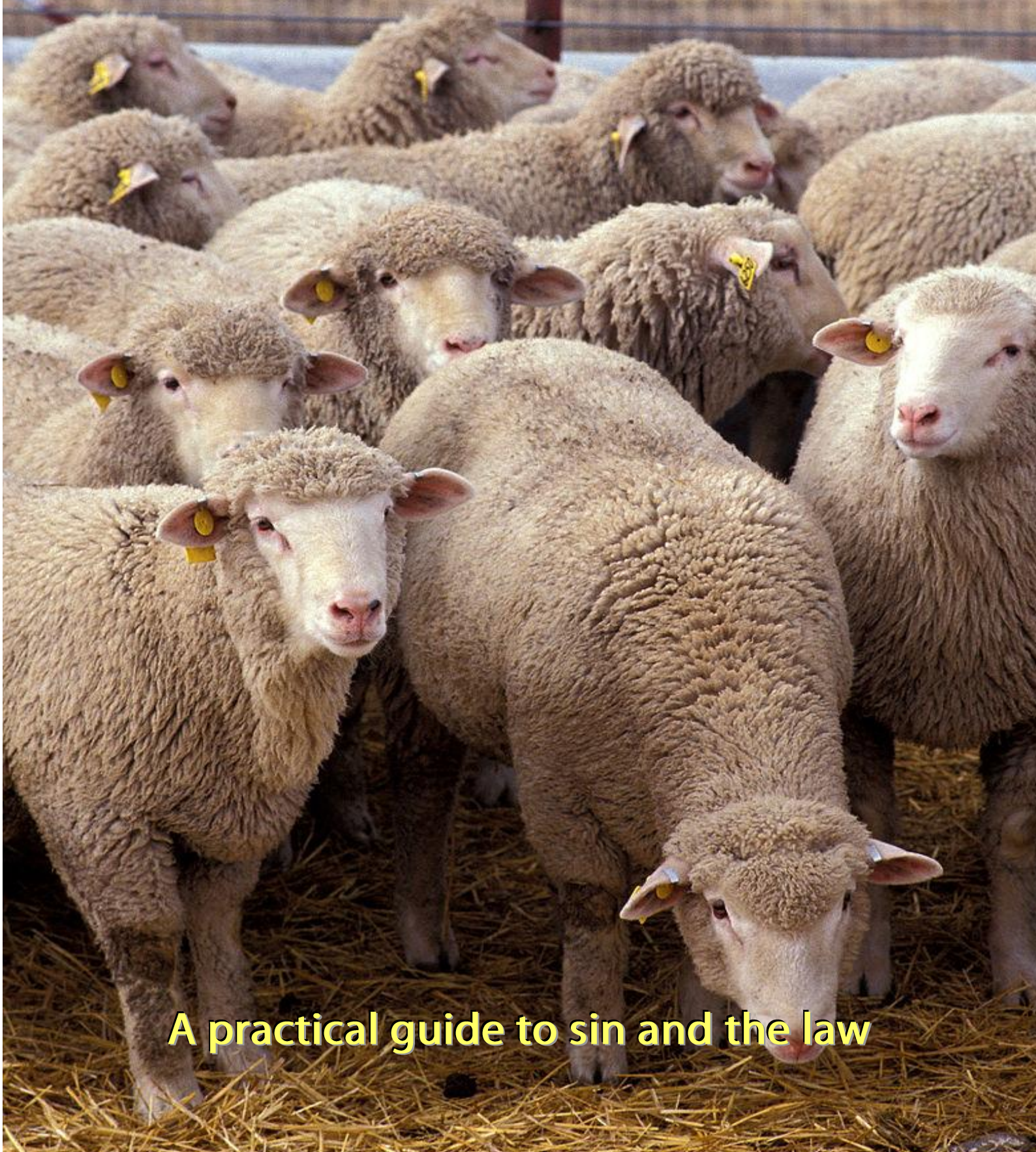


# THE MESSIAH'S IN-LAWS

The Law of Moses

Under the Grace of Christ



A practical guide to sin and the law



*Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Isa 53:6 **All we like sheep have gone astray**; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

*1Co 9:21 τοῖς ἀνόμοις ὡς ἄνομος, μὴ ὢν ἄνομος Θεῷ, ἀλλ' ἔννομος Χριστῷ, ἵνα κερδήσω ἀνόμους·*

*1Co 9:21 to those without Law as without Law (not being without Law of God, but **in- law to Christ**), that I might gain those without Law.*

## Dedication

To the dear Saints,

Thanks be to Christ who has given us all things pertaining to life and godliness.

Dedicated to those souls who patiently sat through these ministries sharing their thoughts, to those who encouraged me through their ministries, together with those who will also derive benefit from these ministries.

Special thanks to my daughter Shelley for her time spent patiently typing the original notes and proofing the text.

Love in Jesus,

Mike.

Current weekly ministries are posted on Soundcloud <https://soundcloud.com/ministry-mike> and <https://www.mixcloud.com/MikesMinistry/>

If you have any questions please contact me via: <https://mwinnett.wordpress.com/>

Why have we quoted the scripture, at length, in this commentary? It is for two reasons. Firstly, if you give a text reference, the reader will seldom look it up, so we have placed it before your eyes. Secondly, it helps to ensure that the relevant text has been chosen. If I have failed to do this I apologise. **Where the Bible version is not stated it is the Authorised Version (KJV) otherwise it is:**

- BBE Bible in Basic English
- CEV Contemporary English Version
- Darby John Nelson Darby Translation
- ERV Easy to Read Version
- Geneva 1587 Version
- GNB Good News Translation
- GW God's Word
- ISV International Standard Version
- KJV Kings James Version
- LEB Lexham English Version
- LITV Literal Translation of the Holy Bible
- LXX Septuagint
- RSV Revised Standard Version
- YLT Young's Literal Translation

Scripture quotations are in *italic script*. All versions can be found in e-Sword.

Blessings upon Rick Meyers for e-Sword <http://www.e-sword.net/> Please consider sending him a contribution if you have not already.

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## THE MESSIAH'S IN-LAWS

### Introduction

A subject that has preoccupied me over the 47 years that I have been a disciple of Christ is how the Christian should relate to the Law of Moses, those '10 commandments'. This volume documents my exploration of the subject. It contains some of my earliest thoughts from Sunday ministries given over 30 years ago that have been developed since then. It is not as expansive as it could be, neither would I say it is complete but as age overtakes me, there comes a time to put the pen down and publish 'warts and all'. The reader will be the judge whether this was a right thing to do.

It has been the inconsistency of thought among Christians that has helped to clarify my thinking. For example, the Sabbatarians holding fast to the weekly observance completely neglect the 7<sup>th</sup> year Sabbath. Israel went into captivity, as we know, not because she failed on the weekly Sabbath but in the 7<sup>th</sup> year Sabbath. Modern day Sabbatarians seem to be equally negligent. My views will emerge later.

The text which acts as my point of departure is the following:

*1Co 9:21 To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, **but under (IN) the law to Christ,**) that I might gain them that are without law. KJV.*

*1Co 9:20 To the Jewish people I identified as a Jew, so that I might win over the Jewish people. To those under Torah I became like one under Torah (though not myself being under Torah), so that I might win over those under Torah; 1Co 9:21 to those outside Torah, like one outside Torah (though not being outside God's Torah but **in Messiah's Torah**), so that I might win over those outside Torah. Tree of Life version.*

How should the Christian relate to the Law given to Moses? Are all our duties to God and our neighbour still defined by that code? Are the sacrifices, offerings, stoning, blindings, smitings and rituals, still part of the rules by which we should conduct our lives?

This question is answered in part when Paul confronts Peter about separating from the Gentiles. We read of this encounter in the epistle to the Galatians. *Gal 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. Gal 2:12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. Gal 2:13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? Gal 2:15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Gal 2:16 **Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.***

With respect to getting "right" with God, getting 'peace with God', it was something that we could never do ourselves even under the first Covenant. We could not become just or justified before God

by the works of the law. We stand before God by the meritorious sacrificial death of Jesus Christ alone and we are beneficiaries of His righteousness, imputed to us. The Law of Moses does not make just men, it does not even help men, it condemns men as sinners before a just Creator.

It goes further than that. Those things that showed men the requirements of God, that is the sacrifices for sins, were removed by Christ's single offering of Himself, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. Righteousness did not come by law and if we try to revive that system as Peter appeared to do, it renders Christ's death invalid. *Gal 2:17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. Gal 2:18 For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. Gal 2:19 For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. Gal 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, **then Christ is dead in vain.***

The part of the Law relating to ritual sacrifices has clearly been abrogated by the death of Christ. *Heb 10:11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins: Heb 10:12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; Heb 10:13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. Heb 10:14 **For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.***

There are many other scriptures that show that the OT ritual laws have a typical or symbolic value rather than a redemptive value. *Heb 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.* The animal sacrifices, the clean and unclean, were expressions of the greater and most perfect sacrifice and holiness of Christ. They show in their breadth and variety the extent of The Saviour's work for fallen humanity and that every condition of sin would be covered by Him. When those ancient people sacrificed, they were in a manner of speaking laying hold of the greater sacrifice of Christ, since that was available to them, else they could not be forgiven<sup>1</sup>. The Lamb of God was slain before the world was made, an eternal verity, yet at the same time He must be manifest in His due season, according to the purpose of God. *Rev 13:8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of **the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*** Jesus Christ was in the Older Testament even if He was sometimes hard to see.

What about the other laws, the Ten Commands? Have they too been consigned to history? That is what we shall try to determine. Of course, these Ten Law words or Commands are of themselves insufficient to describe duty. They are called the apodictic laws. Apodictic laws are commands and as such are not designed for application in the court. For example, if we ask the questions, "Is killing by euthanasia right?", "Is abortion acceptable?", "Do you have to tell the truth to evil men?" it is not answered by the apodictic Law. The Apodictic Laws of the Ten Commands merely declare a general principle. We must then ask, what are the boundaries of the command, "Thou shalt not kill"?

How then are we to answer this and how can we understand the minutiae, the details of the commands? What we require is a form of law to deal with the cases. For example how does the

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<sup>1</sup> Proleptic Grace and Proleptic Justification. Receiving the benefits of Christ ahead of time. The benefits of the death of Christ are retro-active.

question, “Is abortion acceptable?” relate to the 6<sup>th</sup> command, “Thou shalt not kill”. This is where we see the purpose of “Case law” or ‘casuistic law’, which expands upon the apodictic law and gives penalties associated with the particular case. So we see that we have firstly the Apodictic laws of the 10 commands (Exodus chapter 20 vv 1 – 17), then secondly, we have the ‘judgements’ or case laws (Exodus chapter 21, chapter 22 etc.).

The case law of the OT is however incomplete. While the Ten Commands may have been written in stone, the cases were not. The Bible gives us a taste as it were of how the 10 law words might be interpreted but it does not cover every case. In fact, and mainly because of this lack of interpretation, case law spawned a whole industry for the Jewish lawyers as they developed their own case law handbooks such as the Mishnah.

Orthodox Judaism believes that Moses received the Torah (the five books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy) from God and that he wrote down everything God spoke to him. However, they also believe that God gave Moses explanations and examples of how to interpret the Law that Moses did not write down. These unwritten explanations are known in Judaism as the Oral Torah. The Oral Torah was supposedly passed down from Moses to Joshua and then to the Rabbis until eventually in the Christian era, it was finally written down as the legal authority called Halahka (“the walk”). The two main sections of the Oral Torah are the Mishnah and the Gemara.

Orthodox Christianity generally confines itself to the written word and that consists of the Older and New Testament writings, the Canon of Scripture. However, there are also institutional groups (the ‘church’ of England and the Roman catholic ‘church’, etc) who have their own specific traditions that define membership of their institutions. The premise for this study is ‘Sola scriptura’ (by Scripture alone). This is the Christian theological doctrine which holds that the Christian Scriptures are the supreme authority in all matters of doctrine and practice. It is based upon the way that Jesus and the Apostles deal with matters of faith and practice, by reference to the scriptures, thus “It is written”.

The Ten Commands are impacted by case law not just in the Older Testament but in both Testaments. The OT does not have the last word to say about right and wrong, the NT does. So we must examine what the NT says, for example, on the Sabbath, in order to understand its meaning. When we speak about the New Testament, we are not talking about what the Gospels say. For the most part, the Gospels are Older Testament because the Older Testament is firmly in place until the Christ declares on the Cross, **“It is finished”**. Only the Gospel segments after the crucifixion can be called New Testament.

The NT is the final arbiter of the law of God as originally put out in the Mosaic Law. This raises the question as to whether the Law of Moses is mutable. To this I answer that the Ten Commands are immutable but the case law is mutable in its interpretation. This mutability is due to the finished work of Christ and it happens this way. Because Christ has changed the hearts of His people, He now writes the Law in their hearts and minds. *Heb 10:16 This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; Heb 10:17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*

The Spirit of God brings about changes in the way we think and act which is different to the way that Jews behaved in the Older Testament. The law in the OT was **externalised** (on stone tables) and for many they could not ‘see’ what it was about, *2Co 3:14 But their minds were blinded: for until this day*

*remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. 2Co 3:15 But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. They had hard hearts. Mar 10:5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, **For the hardness of your heart** he wrote you this precept.*

The Christian is not like that. He has a fleshly heart as the prophet Ezekiel foresaw, *Eze 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and **I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.** Eze 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.* That new heart brings with it a new attitude.

Christ 'in us' creates a whole new attitude and response that will render many of those old case laws obsolete. For example, divorce for any cause. "For any cause" no longer applies (see cases in Deuteronomy 22). *Mat 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? Mat 19:8 He saith unto them, **Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives:** but from the beginning it was not so. Mat 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*

Christ **internalises** the Law by removing the hard heart, writing the law on our new hearts and minds, giving us a new Spirit, destroying our Old Man and giving us a New Man to put on. Christ is in us and we are in Christ. *Col 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **CHRIST IN YOU**, the hope of glory: 1Co 1:30 But of him are **YE IN CHRIST JESUS**, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:*

This is what I think Paul has in mind when he describes our relationship to the law, as we are in Christ. *1Co 9:21 to those outside Torah, like one outside Torah (though not being outside God's Torah but **in Messiah's Torah**), so that I might win over those outside Torah.* ToLV. In many versions it says "under the law to Christ". "Under the law" is one word, "inlaw" (ἐννομος = ennomos = in law). This word "in-law" is composed of the preposition "in" (ἐν = en = in) and the word "law" (νομος = nomos = law).

We are not lawless, outlaws, because we are not outside of God's law. Our relationship to that law of God is that we have it, but we have it in the Messiah (Christ), in the relationship we have to and with the Messiah. We will manifest that obedience to the law and it will outwork itself as Christ works that same grace, mercy and love into our lives.

Paul makes a statement, *Rom 3:24 being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; Rom 3:25 **whom God has set forth a mercy-seat**, through faith in his blood, for the shewing forth of his righteousness, in respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God;* Darby. The tables of the law were placed in the Ark of the Covenant, and the "Capporet", the Mercy Seat, covered the law. In this type, we see that the law is held in the person of Christ.

As Christ loved the church, so will husbands love their wives and seek to nurture them, not find excuses to dispose of them. No wonder the young Apostles found it hard. *Mat 19:9 And I say unto*

*you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.* Mat 19:10 His disciples say unto him, *If the case of the man be so with his wife, **it is not good to marry***. That was their answer to the law, namely avoid the situation rather than face reality. No! In the NT we are encouraged to live the situation and live it as Christ would. That is being “inlawed” to Christ. That law is held in Christ and this is the essential difference between being a disciple of Moses and a disciple of Christ?

## Methodology

The scope of the commands is so vast that we should aim for thoroughness rather than speed and even then, shall we even do passing justice to them?

The method that we shall adopt in our exposition is to take the case laws of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy and relate them to a particular command, e.g. Exo 21:12 *He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death* relates to the 6<sup>th</sup> command.

We shall group the cases which may relate to more than one command e.g. Deu 24:14-15 *Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates: At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it: lest he cry against thee unto the LORD, and it be sin unto thee.* This relates to the 8th, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> commands.

All of the sections that bear a relationship to a specific command will be combined and the information presented in order to try and give an accurate picture of the range of the command.

The reader may find it is a good exercise to go through the Pentateuch and each time a case law appears, pencil in the margin the related command number. One thing is certain and that is, that cases will all relate back to one of the ten law words.

Let us stress that the commands are practical and relevant to the Kingdom of God (Kingdom of Heaven). Matt 5 v 18 – 20 *For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he **shall be called the least in the Kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven.** For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of heaven.* We will try to see our relationship to the commands in a practical way, not just in a theoretical way. It is teaching and doing.

Certain things have changed as we transition into the NT, the Kingdom of God. The OT nation of Israel was the church and the OT church was the State. This is not so now. We must therefore reassess our relationships under the law and under grace as they affect us;

1. Personally,
2. Towards an individual (3<sup>rd</sup> party),
3. Towards an assembly of Gods’ people and



#### 4. Towards society at large.

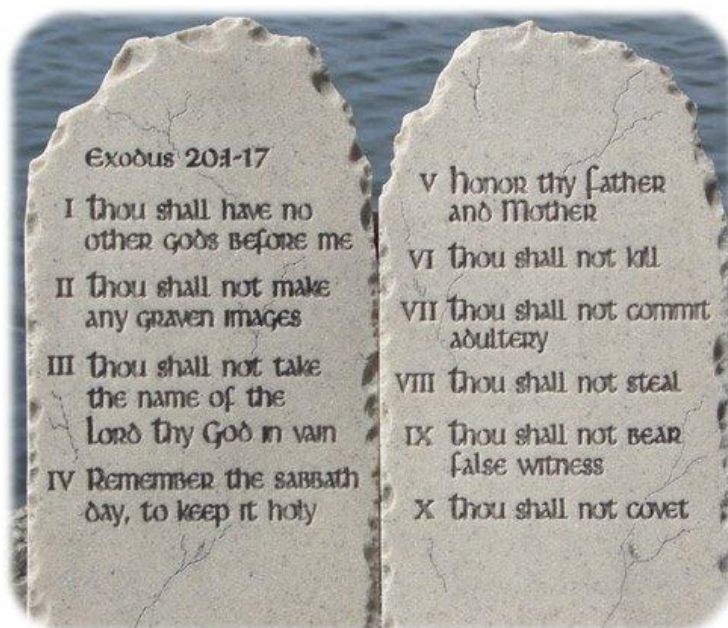
These laws were originally given to a community in covenant with God, a community of believers and unbelievers. Not everyone who became a partaker of the covenant signs was saved, *1Co 10:5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.* These laws have a wider scope, because the 2<sup>nd</sup> table (Commands 5 to 10) formed the basis of a stable society. However, to follow them without obedience to the lawgiver is sin. *Rom 2:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, **are a law unto themselves.***

The law is gracious not harsh and it was an act of God's mercy to give it to man in the first place. He could have just wiped out humanity completely. Instead, we find the nature of God revealed in the righteous requirements of the law, although we know that this is unachievable by man. *Rom 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Rom 3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:* The righteousness of God comes to us through Christ.

As a rule when dealing with the case laws, we should never define a GENERAL case from a SPECIFIC case. For example, because the case law says that is wrong to be cruel to a slave, do not suppose that SLAVERY is wrong! *Exo 21:20 And if a man strikes his male slave or his slave-girl with a rod, and he dies under his hand, avenging **he shall be avenged.*** LITV. Slaves were to be treated fairly but slavery was regulated and part of the law. *Exo 21:2 When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years And in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.*

We shall have to lay groundwork and define from Scripture (the Soul/sole authority by the quickening of the Spirit) certain moral attributes, by which we mean things pertaining to character or conduct (see Exodus 17). If we are to understand our personal moral deficiencies we shall need to be careful to see the true grounds for our condemnation. The Bible will be the lodestone, sextant, compass, lead line and log of our navigation through the Law.

The Law prises open a man's heart, the barrel of maggots that is the remnant of the Fall. *Jer 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* Paul's starting point for knowing SIN is the 10<sup>th</sup> command. *Rom 7: 7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, **Thou shalt not covet.*** Jesus also makes it the starting point for following Him. *Mar 10:17 And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? ..... Mar 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, **One thing***



***thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.***

So with respect to the many who start at command 1 and work through to command 10, we shall start at command 10 and work up to command 1. I think as we approach the first command we shall see how much greater this is, with all the laws in place around us and this as the pinnacle.

We shall need to define virtues, moral qualities, since these are cognate with the character of true obedience. Qualities such as truthfulness, honesty, faithfulness, consistency, sincerity and humility. Vicious characteristics, i.e. vices, will be contrast to these virtues, things such as lying, malice, envy, pride, strife etc.

Peter puts virtue before knowledge. *2Pe 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge.* (ἀρέτη = aretē = virtue, from Ἄρης = Arēs = Mars. Military virtue, manliness (valor), that is, excellence). A correct perspective of scripture will only emerge from this position of God's righteousness, *Jer 9:23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches.* Faith is the foundation, virtue the floor and knowledge the walls.

We thus start with the 10<sup>th</sup> command as we climb this ladder of blessings and curses.

### Using the Law

On a number of occasions, the NT recounts the conflicts between Judaism and Christianity. We have mentioned the one that occurred between the Apostles Peter and Paul in Antioch. Another occasion is recorded in Acts chapter 15. *Act 15:1 And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.*

The resolution of the issue was pronounced by James, *Act 15:19 Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: Act 15:20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood. Act 15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.* Clearly, you could be saved without being circumcised and you could be a Christian without being fully subscribed to Judaism. This decision did not affect the reading of the Law of Moses who still had his followers in synagogues and it was not designed to put an end to what was essentially dying out. The decision was given to reduce conflict between Jewish and Gentile believers and what we see is a slimmed down version of some of the external manifestations of Judaism.

Some of these issues are revisited later by Paul. *1Co 10:25 However, when you buy meat in the market, go ahead and eat it. Keep your conscience clear by not asking where the meat came from. 1Co 10:26 The Scriptures say, "The earth and everything in it belong to the Lord. 1Co 10:27 If an unbeliever invites you to dinner, and you want to go, then go. Eat whatever you are served. Don't cause a problem for someone's conscience by asking where the food came from. 1Co 10:28 But if you*

*are told that it has been sacrificed to idols, don't cause a problem by eating it. I don't mean a problem for yourself, but for the one who told you. Why should my freedom be limited by someone else's conscience? CEV.*

This adds another dimension to the concept of “Right” and “Wrong” for the Christian because the conscience is brought into play. The conscience represents the moral attitude that we have to God and each other. *Act 24:16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.* The conscience is the mirror of God’s law or word (it reflects it by bearing witness to it), *Rom 2:15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, **their conscience also bearing witness**, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;*). The conscience bears witness to the law of God and as such consciences will vary between individuals, depending on the knowledge that they have acquired of the word.

Some people will have a weak conscience but they are still believers. The idea is that we should not cause these weaker brothers offence or cause them to stumble. If therefore, something has been offered to idols and is sold off in a meat market, you can eat it if you wish. However, if a brother comes along and points out its origin and that is likely to be a stumbling block for him to see you eat it, then you do not eat it, for his sake. You and I might have a more robust conscience because we can see that evil does not exist in a mere inanimate object. We do not accept a statement such as “demon drink” because the evil is not in the inanimate object, the drink or the bottle, but in the attitude of the person who drinks it.

Many people like to find fault in “inanimate” objects. It can be food, drink, makeup, clothing, possessions, birthdays, Christmas, and so on. If it causes offence then we forgo it for their sake. That does not mean that we let them trample over us and destroy our freedoms. The weak conscience must not be allowed to permanently hold our freedoms to ransom. We can educate them and we should, as part of the process of Christian growth. People with a weak conscience must equally be bound to show the strong that what they hold has some basis in scripture, or reject it. We must show that it is an act of faith coming from God’s word. *Rom 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* If we act outside of faith it is sin.

I will also warn against what I term “Vector<sup>2</sup> morality”. Vector morality is the morality that says a certain amount of something is acceptable and another amount is unacceptable. It is developing an idea that we can set fixed limits on what individuals should participate in. Because you can only drink one glass of wine, you may set it as a moral limit. Anything above that, two glasses for instance, becomes immoral, something by which you can judge another to have morally lapsed. One glass good, two glasses bad! I believe that this too is sin. It has echoes of George Orwell’s animal farm, “four legs good, two legs better”. If we embark on this way of thinking we will find a Pope in ourselves, whereby we attempt to govern other consciences and behaviours by our own arbitrary standards.

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<sup>2</sup> Vector = a quantity having direction as well as magnitude, especially as determining the position of one point in space relative to another.

Another example of this would be “long hair” (κομάω = komaō, whence comet), *1Co 11:14 Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? 1Co 11:15 But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.* So just what length makes a man’s hair long and is that the same as the woman’s long hair? My own view is biased by my upbringing, when as a boy, a “short back and sides” left you looking like a convict on a prison ship, while girls had long plaits hanging down their backs. This was a standard for that time. But who am I to set that standard for the people of God? That is where the individual Christian has to make peace with His Lord over the matter whilst acknowledging the biblical observance.

There is a spectrum of issues relating to food, drink and other behaviours. *Rom 14:20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. Rom 14:21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Rom 14:22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. Rom 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for **whatsoever is not of faith is sin.***

The overarching principle of all freedoms is this, *1Co 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, **do all to the glory of God.** 1Co 10:32 **Give none offence,** neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God.*

Another observation that I make concerning the Law of Moses is that it was given as part of the covenant with the Creator. *Psa 78:10 They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law;* Covenant keeping and walking in the law go together. The covenant was specifically with the people of Israel. *Exo 6:3 And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them. Exo 6:4 And **I have also established my covenant with them,** to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers.*

The law, the commands, the offerings were given to Israel. *Rom 9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Rom 9:5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

Let me stress this again. The law was given to Israel, it was not given to the other nations. It was permissible on occasion to enter the nation of Israel (become a Jew) subject to certain conditions (circumcision) but the law was given to the Israelites alone. As such it formed the basis of relationships within the nation. The neighbour was an Israelite and **not a gentile** outside of the nation. *Lev 19:17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him. Lev 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against **the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.***

Should the believer then apply the law, the ten commands, to an unbeliever who is not in covenant with God? This can lead to the idea that legal obedience ingratiates a person with God and makes him acceptable to God through legal obedience (justification by works). The Bible of course is a book

for the covenant people and so we must ask what purpose does the law serve in the lives of the unregenerate and unbelieving? We must question the motive for Christians trying to put the unbeliever under law, condemning him for things that he does not believe or even know? Why do we force Moses upon that person, when we ourselves could not bear the burden of legal obedience?

This requires explanation. The law as Paul says, is holy. *Rom 7:12 Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.* The law by the operation of the Spirit may bring about the conviction of sin. *Rom 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* That of course does not solve the problem of sin in our lives, it just makes sin a conscious fact of life. Dealing with that sin is another matter.

The law in its proper operation acts as a schoolmaster to teach us about the need for Christ. *Gal 3:23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Gal 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Gal 3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.*

The law displays the Divine standards of both right and wrong. We might say that “honour you parents” is a statement of righteousness and “you shall not kill” a statement of ‘wrongeousness’. In this, the law reveals something of the nature of our Creator. It reveals the disparity between fallen human nature and that perfect nature in Christ the Creator.

When Paul preaches to the gentiles in Athens, he does not lay upon them, in the first case, the idea that obeying a set of laws, gets them into favour with this new ‘unknown’ God. Understanding the requirements of the Creator will require a process of discipleship. It will require being ‘in-lawed’ to Christ. *Act 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

This righteousness is explained by Paul. *Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: Rom 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

We must also accept the fact that the unbeliever is not the same as the believer. The unbeliever is not an ignorant believer, he is an enemy of God. *Col 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and **enemies in your mind by wicked works**, yet now hath he reconciled* . He must be reborn through a work of the Holy Spirit. He must have his mind renewed. There is no way that the unbeliever will become a Christian through adopting a new set of rules for life. The New Englanders soon discovered this. It was a particular issue when the fledgling community of believers set out to build a State in which to exercise their religious freedoms. The “General laws of the inhabitants of the Jurisdiction of New Plymouth” (1672 and 1685) had capital laws (death penalties) for blasphemy, idolatry, false witness, man stealing and so on, while adultery was punished with a whipping. Just to throw in a bit



of future unforgiveness, they had brandings so that men carried a mark for life that related to their crime. Think what it would be like if God did that to us?

In order to create a Christian State, the New Englanders reverted to the laws of Moses and some of the penalties of the laws of Moses, in order to regulate society. Those who disagreed with the majority (believers at first) felt aggrieved and rightly so. The Massachusetts Bay Colony was not a Democracy because its governor (Winthrop) did not like Democracy. He did not think that the "commoners" could rule. The colony's religious residents (freemen) annually elected the governor and his assistants and a representative assembly called the General Court. Non-religious residents could not vote. Christians had the upper hand. In time the laws are changed in favour of another majority (unbelieving group). The New Englanders had tried to set up a Theocracy (Government under God) but fell foul of democracy and the democratic process in the end.

The modern Christian Reconstruction movement (in the US) has been actively working to bring back government under a Theocratic platform. They want Moses to sit in the seat of Government in order to exercise, as they see it, the "Dominion Mandate". The "Dominion Mandate" is the cultural or dominion mandate in Genesis *Gen 1:28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, **and subdue it:** and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.* It is the pre-figurement to other mandates in the Bible. In the Bible it says Noah received a commission to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" (Genesis 9:1).

The most extreme exercise of Dominion is the use of violence to establish the supremacy of law. In Plymouth and in the Commonwealth of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Calvin's teachings found their freest expression. Church members elected their own officials, who framed laws, elected justices, waged war, and negotiated treaties, all supposedly for the glory of God and the benefit of their fellow citizens. Christian Reconstructionism's founder, the late Rousas J Rushdoony, wrote in 'The Institutes of Biblical Law' (TIOBL) (the founding document of reconstructionism) that Old Testament law should be applied to modern society and he advocates the reinstatement of the Mosaic law's penal sanctions. Under such a system, the list of civil crimes which carried a death sentence would include homosexuality, adultery, incest, lying about one's virginity, bestiality, witchcraft, idolatry or apostasy, public blasphemy, false prophesying, kidnapping, rape, and bearing false witness in a capital case. In these Institutes (p93) it is stated:

"Law is a state of war; it is the organisation of the powers of civil government to bring the enemies of the law-order to justice. The officers of the law are properly armed; **in a godly state**, they should be armed by the justice of the law as well as weapons of warfare, in order to defend society against its enemies"

The question then comes down to whether God intends to exercise dominion and "subdue" through the application of the laws of Moses or through the Power of Christ. That will depend upon how you view God's purpose. Jesus was at pains to show an earthly ruler Pontius Pilate that His Kingdom was not of this world, *Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, **My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight,** that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.*

The Dominion Mandate clearly does not apply to this earth under the Kingship of Christ. Temporal violence and war are not part of Christ's Gospel strategy (they are part of the Divine providence and judgements). The Church, as a body of redeemed people, does not operate as the world does, neither do they apply violence to the person to achieve their aims. *1Co 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 1Co 6:2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 1Co 6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?*

Christian warfare is not against mankind, flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. *Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* This conflicts with idea that we are to subjugate a temporal realm with carnal weapons.

We may ask then why Israel in the OT was engaged in warfare against their surrounding nations whereas the NT Israel, the Israel of God, the Church is not engaged in temporal warfare? An explanation for this is that the journey of the earthly nation of Israel is typical of the spiritual journey of the NT Israel of God. Earthly aspects (the Tabernacle and its furniture, sacrifices, the Nation of Israel, the battles, the journeys etc) are replaced by the spiritual realities (Christ, the Israel of God, the Kingdom of God, spiritual warfare etc). The OT is a visible enactment of the NT spiritual reality. *Heb 8:5 Who serve unto **the example and shadow of heavenly things**, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.* The Older Testament was a "shadow land" and this consideration will also impact on our understanding of the law.

As we look at the law we need to see what is obligatory and what freedoms we may have. We shall see as we progress, God willing, how the law applies to us today.

## The 10<sup>th</sup> COMMAND

*Exo 20:17 Never desire to take your neighbor's household away from him. Never desire to take your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that belongs to him. GW.*

For those who think that God has moderated His anger against sins such as covetousness in the New Testament, they must consider the case of Ananias, with Sapphira in Acts chapter 5. Their sin, a composite of covetousness, lying and theft was punished with death. It is a salutary lesson that we in the church must approach these commandments reverently and carefully.

### Covetousness and possessions

The command addresses us as individuals (2<sup>nd</sup> person singular – you). Not just the person next to you or your friends, or your neighbours but you personally. As we hear it, it speaks to us PERSONALLY. It is you and I God personally addresses, you and I, His own creatures. It is one of the few personal addresses of God to the individuals of His creation. It is also a command that looks at our Intentions rather than actions.

It is that remnant of our sinful nature that will rise up and make us judges of those around us before we apply the law to ourselves, last of all. Drink it yourself before you pour it down anybody else's throat and taste and see that the Lord is good.

The 10<sup>th</sup> command is the heading or principle of a number of cases in scripture. Coveting has a far wider range than is specified here in one verse, Exodus chapter 20 verse 17 and because a particular item is not mentioned does not mean that it is not included. This verse gives us a few examples by way of illustration. The 10 commands are general headings as we shall see and we must give them due consideration in their wider application so as not to miss their point.

This command number 10 prohibits our inordinate desires from material possessions that are our neighbours. Some could legitimately become ours, but it is not in the possession but in the desire, that the sin is found. This command is designed to protect:

1. **Ownership of property**, *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house,*
2. **Property in persons and servitude**, *thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant*
3. **Chattels**, *nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

The subject of slavery or servitude will be dealt with fully later, but suffice to say here the NT and OT positively condone it and never condemn its proper use.

The word covet (חָמַד = châmad) means to be warm, eager, striving after, covert or take pleasure in). It is derived from a Hebrew root word meaning to be hot. It is related to the Arabic "ham" whence **CHYM**istry, the science of heat.

Examples of its usage are:

- Son 2:3 *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great **delight**, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*
- Gen 2:9 *And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is **pleasant** to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.*
- Isa 53:2 *For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should **desire** him.*

We can see in covetousness, a picture of someone striving after, sweating after, craving after some object upon which his whole emotion and exertion is fixed, like a man in the desert who thinks only of water. The craving of wicked Ahab for Naboth's vineyard is such that he cannot eat, *1Ki 21:4 And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.* The burning in Amnon for his sister Tamar, *2Sa 13:2 And Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her.*

Not all desire is sinful, *Psa 19:9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. Psa 19:10 More to be **desired** are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.* We must then set the limits of covetousness.

So that we do not become unbalanced at the start, let us see what the Bible says about possessions. What rights do we have to own things? We may develop pangs of conscience about ownership and a false understanding of ownership has often led to self deprivation, humiliation and self denial among many factions of religion. The monastic life is thought to be virtuous by its denial. Poverty itself becomes a virtue. Dressing in old clothes becomes a badge of humility and un-worldliness. Self neglect a mark of the man who has given up on earthly living.

To the contrary, under the law of Israel, possessions were a mark of God's blessing to the obedient souls, *Deu 28:2 And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.* If God has given us possessions let us thank Him and use them aright. Man the creature was given the produce of the earth *Gen 1:29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.* It was given at the price of labour. He did not sit under a tree and catch ripe bananas in his mouth as he lay in the sunshine. He laboured **before** the fall. It was after the fall that it became "hard" labour<sup>3</sup>.

The produce was a possession and reward of labour. Following on, the blessing of procreation and the command to subdue the earth, give Adam scope for developing his assets further. Let us not forget however, that what we develop in this life are in effect the rewards of stewardship. We own nothing in life and we stand indebted to our Creator for all that we have. *1Ti 6:7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.*

<sup>3</sup> Note the quality of life in Eden was determined by the relationship with God.

In Genesis chapter 4 we can see the diversity of labour. Cain has a field, Abel has a flock but both are the property of God, they have stewardship or temporary ownership. Possessions are leasehold from God, hence the concept of the “year of release” and the Jubilee, where the status quo is re-established in the land. The land returns to its original settlement given by God.

There was a legitimate (albeit temporal) ownership and providing one had the right you could transfer property. *Gen 20:14 And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife.* The transfer to kin in the order of their birth (birthright) was observed, but God still had the right to distribute His property and override natural claimants. For example Jacob (supplanter) over Esau. *Gen 25:23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and **the elder shall serve the younger.***

Jacob was blessed in his labour, *Gen 31:41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.* Joseph was blessed in acquisition by mental ability (God given wisdom) *Gen 41:37 And the thing was good in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of all his servants.* Yet God could still transfer the whole property of a nation to individuals *Gen 26:3 Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swear unto Abraham thy father.*

It is the Creator’s world, and the Owner has the right to give it to whom He will. *Deu 8:7 For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills.* For the nation of Israel as for any individual on earth, God was sole owner and they His stewards. The nation of Israel eventually forfeited the land because they rejected His statutes. Israel was always a sitting tenant.

In summary, the Bible shows that:

- 1) God as sole proprietor
- 2) Legitimate ownership i.e. by birth, labour, by barter is encouraged
- 3) The duration of possession is a lifetime
- 4) Failure to comply with Gods’ laws has been a cause for poverty
- 5) Property transfer by men is not condemned.

### Covetousness and ownership

As wealth increases so can the problems associated with it. It can bring competition and conflict. *Gen 13:5-7 And Lot also, which went with Abram, had flocks, and herds, and tents. And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together. **And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle:** and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.*

Self consumption and greed can lead to wars. *Jas 4:1-3 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill,*



*and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

Entropy will also play its part as we live in a world of moth and rust, “change and decay in all around I see”. This phenomenon exists in part to teach us where true value lies. *Mat 6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: Mat 6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.* As Solomon observed wealth becomes a preoccupation which can be like chasing the wind *Ecc 2:11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.*

Job however had the right attitude to possessions. He knew his place *Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. Blessed be the name of the Lord!*

God blesses labour that is honest, but He would at the same time have us question our motives for gaining wealth. We must always have in mind our service to God and work as unto Him to further His Kingdom and benefit His subjects. *Luk 12:16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: Luk 12:17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? Luk 12:18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. Luk 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. Luk 12:20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? Luk 12:21 **So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.***

You also had to be rich towards your fellow believers by not charging interest on loans. *Lev 25:35 And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger, or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Lev 25:36 Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee.* Your brother like you is God's son and you are both in the same family. As a family we have things we share in common. Our prosperity is to be shared. *Act 2:45 And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.* As someone once observed, “The last part of a man to be converted is his pocket”.

The ideas that emerge here are:

1. Property; houses, wives, slaves, cattle and money can be obtained honourably before God with His blessing.
2. We have limited (but God recognised) rights, to distribute, use and increase our wealth.
3. A believer should be conscious of using and getting what he can for Gods' service and his neighbours where necessary.
4. Abuse of wealth, greed for selfish ends and anxiety over it are forbidden. Riches are deceitful. *Mat 13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the **deceitfulness of riches**, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.* – the deceit of riches).

5. So it will be seen that it is not in the genuine possession of an article but in the attitude we exercise when using it that matters. When a man strives for money to consume upon his own lusts, mark that desire. Question the motive for earning and then earn honourably.

### Covetousness and aspirational greed

Possessions while at times a physical parallel of spiritual prosperity, are at the same time a test of fidelity to God, *Deu 8:18 But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.* It is like the raising of a false prophet to test fidelity, *Deu 13:3 Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

In contrast to the earthly nation of Israel, The NT church sees the emphasis on spiritual gifts more than earthly gifts. These spiritual gifts are:

1. In the form of ministries, *Eph 4:8 Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;*
2. In the powers to the saints - *1Co 12:7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 1Co 12:8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 1Co 12:9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 1Co 12:10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:*

Temporal prosperity is I suggest, a figure for the spiritual blessings of the Messiah's Kingdom. While prosperity often symbolised spiritual blessings, a wealthy person is not automatically a righteous person. Status on earth is not status in heaven. The false idea of temporal prosperity as a mark of eternal blessedness is brought into question by the Lord Jesus. *Luk 16:19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: Luk 16:20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, Luk 16:21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. Luk 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; Luk 16:23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*

The NT corrects and defines the attitude to possessions and riches. It establishes them in their true position. Whilst we have seen that it is not wrong morally to be rich, there are many dangers attendant on possessions. Our attitude to riches is an indicator of our spiritual state. The moral value of any action can only be weighed by the intent which produces it in the heart of a man. The action of the heart should come from volition acting in harmony with God's law.

Money is **NOT** the root of evil as some might misquote. The love of money is! *1Ti 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* "The love of money" is one word in the Greek

(φιλαργυρία = philarguria) composed of the words “fondness” and “silver”, whence “fondness for silver” or the love of money. It is particularly the desire for money, the affection for money.

Covetousness has a sinful side:

- *Luk 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.*
- *2Ti 3:2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy*
- *1Ti 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

The epistle to the Hebrews issues a prohibition, then a positive command, *Heb 13:5 Don't love money. Be happy with what you have because God has said, "I will never abandon you or leave you."* GW. Let your manner of life be without the love of money, be satisfied with your present circumstances. Covetousness is the sin of the miser and the hoarder.

Another word for covetousness implies “grasping” (πλεονεξία = pleonexia), grasping for more. *Luk 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.* In an age where people are judged by what they possess, “grasping” has become a national pastime. Why else do the newspapers carry so many stories about wealthy people and why are there so many articles on the life styles of the rich and famous? It is because people aspire to it.

There is a boundary for possessions. It is the line when crossed where possessions become a snare, the Almighty God is dethroned and mammon is put on the throne. Christ is no longer King, He has been kicked out of the heart for some corrupt bauble, “a wedge of Gold and a Babylonish garment”. *Jos 7:21 When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.*

How do we see that boundary? Jesus shows it to a ruler by setting him a simple test. Give it up. *Luk 18:22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: **sell all that thou hast**, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. Luk 18:23 And when he heard this, **he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.** Luk 18:24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! He was sorrowful (περίλυπος = perilupos = ‘sad all around’). If we have such a love of possessions that it would make us sorrowful to lose them, we have problems.*

It also shows where our compass points us to what is of value. Abraham valued his eternal reward. *Gen 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.* In the balances of true wealth, heavenly treasure, this was an exceeding great reward. Abraham never looked for any permanent dwelling in this life because earth was not his home. *Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

Judas had imperfect balances when he put Christ in one pan and 30 pieces of silver in the other pan. In his estimation the 30 pieces weighed more. The betrayal of Christ by Judas was not political or religious, it was cold calculating covetousness. *“What will you give me?” Mat 26:14-15 Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.*

Yet observe carefully the following. He was filled with remorse and committed suicide, yet he had not full repentance for sin against God. He has limited sorrow. Sin will always bring its remorse, guilt and shame, like the rich man in Hades, or Eve’s covetousness for the fruit. The question is, “is it godly sorrow?” *2Co 7:10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*

Judas also used charity as a cloak for his covetousness *Joh 12:4-6 Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.* Many men would so often **appear** generous and soft hearted, philanthropic, yet are inwardly wolves. Judas loved money. He was a thief. He had the bag. He carried what was put in it. It went about with him but he did not put it into usury to gain interest, i.e. put it to work (even though he has heard Christ’s teaching on prudence). He liked carrying it about., like Dickens character Fagin and his “pretty things” (p49 Oliver Twist). *“There, there mine Oliver, my little property, all I have to live upon in my old age. The folks call me a miser my dear. Only a miser that’s all”.* The archetypal Jew portrayed by anti-Semites and this unfortunately is how that once great Nation is oft considered but I doubt that it had much truth in it.

Judas was similar to Ananias and Sapphira, they were liars (and thieves), but principally they were censured for lying (Act 5). They “appeared” as generous, they made a show, sufficient to have given all the impression of committing all to God’s cause but they had not. They kept back some just in case! It was not wrong to keep their possessions, but having made as if to give them all, by promise, the ownership was transferred. Thus to keep any of what was no longer theirs was theft. But it had its root in a lie and was an example of covetousness and sin. See how covetousness has a sister called deceit living in the same house of lies.

Contrast this attitude with Zacchaeus. *Luk 19:7-8 And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.* Zacchaeus was faithful and honest within the bounds of his actions. His actions mirrored his thoughts.

Gehazi, Elisha’s servant was a covetous person. *2Ki 5:20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.* Again a false servant, a covetous man, a liar! *2Ki 5:26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?* But Elisha like Peter has discernment, he has full knowledge of Gehazi’s actions and whereabouts, and Gehazi is rewarded for his sin. The punishment of Gehazi was leprosy.

The diseases of God in the OT often mirror the spiritual offence. Miriam and Uzziah are struck with leprosy, which appears to be associated with the particular sins of covetousness and pride. Uzziah presumed another's position of priesthood and Miriam presumed equality and coveted Moses position. Leprosy is a disease that turns a person white, a corrupt whiteness. Like a false righteousness or self righteousness. Self righteousness is the whiteness of leprosy, God's righteousness is a whiteness of snow.

So the love of money, the false and deceitful motive kills spirituality. A man who is like this is as a leper before God, for he has put himself outside of God's camp. He pronounced himself unclean, he is brought to Christ. *Lev 13:2 When a man shall have in the skin of his flesh a rising, a scab, or bright spot, and it be in the skin of his flesh like the plague of leprosy; then he shall be brought unto Aaron the priest, or unto one of his sons the priests:).* Do you not know this? *1Co 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 1Co 6:10 Nor thieves, **nor covetous**, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

No one can claim to be a Christian and covetous at the same time. God has no place for them. Learning to be content and learning to put the flesh down are precious remedies. *Heb 13:5 Let your **conduct be without covetousness**; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* And..... *Col 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and **covetousness**, which is idolatry.* Mammon substituted by God.

### Covetousness and charity

We shall now examine how scripture encourages us away from coveting, away from false motivations towards what we should be like. It shows how we can develop a positive attitude to the command. Should we just be neutral and not covet or does it imply that a Godly heart will be a generous heart? Certainly covetousness comes from a hard heart *Eph 4:18 being darkened in understanding, estranged from the life of God by reason of the ignorance which is in them, by reason of the hardness of their hearts, Eph 4:19 who having cast off all feeling, have given themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with **greedy unsatisfied lust**.* Darby.

Generosity is part of the new nature. *1Jn 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, **how dwelleth the love of God in him?** 1Jn 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.*

It is not sufficient to pay lip service, there must be some outgoing and more than that it should become natural to us, not forced and not ostentatious *Mat 6:1 Take heed that ye **do not your alms before men**, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven* and further it is not just what is given, but what is left over. It is easier to give a lot when you have a lot. *Luk 21:1-4 And he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this*



*poor widow hath cast in more than they all: For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.*

God taught charity in the OT in many ways and we shall examine them because the providence of God was to be put to God's service and not to self-service. The providence of God is distributed in two ways

- a. Acts of charity to the widows and the poor
- b. Furtherance of the Kingdom of God.

We are warned about being mean spirited and finding excuses to avoid generosity. *Deu 15:9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.* This makes it quite clear that that being mean is a sin. Whilst covetousness is sinful, it can also be sinful to omit being generous. Covetousness has found another way to destroy us by being neglectful of others. Watch children offer sweets, they will they grasp the neck of the bag so that you can only take one or will they open the bag wide? Sometimes giving can be "tight fisted".

In the construction of the Tabernacle, people were encouraged to volunteer their possessions. *Exo 25:2-9 Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, And blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, And rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, Oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, Onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.*

The heave offering was already owned and given by God *Exo 11:2 Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. Exo 11:3 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians.* The issue now was whether the people could give up what God had given them. In this lies the true test of the generous heart.

*Exo 35:20-22 And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. And they came, every one whose heart stirred him up, and every one whom his spirit made willing, and they brought the LORD'S offering to the work of the tabernacle of the congregation, and for all his service, and for the holy garments. And they came, both men and women, as many as were willing hearted, and brought bracelets, and earrings, and rings, and tablets, all jewels of gold: and every man that offered offered an offering of gold unto the LORD.*

The wave offering embraces this concept of giving. The idea that is expressed is the action of offering to God and not coveting for oneself. At the consecration of the priests, at the part of the service after the blood sprinkling, the sacrifice was symbolically lifted up to the Lord. *Exo 29:22-28 Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of*

consecration: *And one loaf of bread, and one cake of oiled bread, and one wafer out of the basket of the unleavened bread that is before the LORD: And thou shalt put all in the hands of Aaron, and in the hands of his sons; and shalt **wave them for a wave offering** before the LORD. And thou shalt receive them of their hands, and burn them upon the altar for a burnt offering, for a sweet savour before the LORD: it is an offering made by fire unto the LORD. And thou shalt take the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration, and **wave it for a wave offering** before the LORD: and it shall be thy part. And thou shalt sanctify the breast of the wave offering, and the shoulder of the heave offering, which is waved, and which is heaved up, of the ram of the consecration, even of that which is for Aaron, and of that which is for his sons: And it shall be Aaron's and his sons' by a statute for ever from the children of Israel: for it is an heave offering: and it shall be an heave offering from the children of Israel of the sacrifice of their peace offerings, even their heave offering unto the LORD.* The wave offering appears as part of the peace offerings.

Do the “Wave breast” and “Heave shoulder”, given to Aaron for his priestly service signify our service to God? We offer our breast, the place where our heart lies and our shoulder where our strength lies. Our giving must be from our heart and our labours to the service of God. We may use some for our needs but we must never forget its origin, which is why all Christians should give thanks for their food as well as every other gift.

By heaving and waving, attention is drawn to the purity of the sacrifice in and by drawing attention to it, it signifies our desire for peace with God, Christ our peace. Remember the High Priest garments and the breast that bore the tribes, and the shoulder that bore the generations. *Exo 28:11 With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, shalt thou engrave the two stones with the names of the children of Israel: thou shalt make them to be set in ouches of gold.*

We as the people of God must also be in a fit state before God and only through Christ. *Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? .... Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.....Col 1:21-23 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*

We should be like the Levites of old who were willing before God to sacrifice and be sacrificed in His service Levites were offered to God *Num 8:19-22 And I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the service of the children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation, and to make an atonement for the children of Israel: that there be no plague among the children of Israel, when the children of Israel come nigh unto the sanctuary.*

It is not unreasonable that we should do the same, *Rom 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

The Macedonian church would become charitable after they made their own sacrifice, *2Co 8:5 And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God.* Here then is an answer to covetousness and it will be seen in our actions and intents.

1. Am I prepared to give my life and substance over to Him who gave His life for me?
2. Am I prepared to support the work of God on this earth?
3. Am I prepared to give to His people?
4. Am I prepared to give the best of what I have been loaned by God?

I had often thought what would I do if the Lord gave me a large sum of money? Would I really use it all for His kingdom? I thought that I might. Then one day when meditating about this, it came into my mind, “Why do you want more? You haven’t spent what I have already given to you”. There I discovered the seed of covetousness in my own heart.

### Covetousness and the tithe

A second aspect of giving under the law was the system of Tithes. Tenthing. One might say that it was the decimation of your profits. Tithing occurred before the formal giving of the law and it was a privilege of a king. It was the sign of Melchizedek’s superiority (*Gen 14:18-20 And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he (Abram) gave him tithes of over the Levites, Melchizedek was a superior to Abram. Heb 7:6-8 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.*

When the nation decided that they did not want Jehovah to rule over them and that they should have a king like other nations, Samuel gave them the rules of a king. *1Sa 8:15 And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants.* It was a holy portion (*Lev 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’S: it is holy unto the LORD*). It was to be done truly (*cognisance Deu 14:22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year*).

Life was far less taxing under the priesthood, where only a single tithe was demanded. Now, the price of the king was a second tithe on top of the priestly tithe. The further away from God we move the more expensive life becomes. In the UK, the average citizen is working for the state from the beginning of the year until about the end of May, after that he will be earning for himself and even then he will pay more taxes, depending on what he purchases.

Another point we observe with the tithe is that it was taken out of the “increase”. *Deu 14:28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the **tithe of thine increase** the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: Deu 14:29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.*

The Israelite would not pay a tithe on his savings or his capital. He was free to increase his wealth by the grace of God., unlike governments today whose aim is to take as much of your income and savings, especially at the point of death. The Israelite community encouraged capitalism.

We can see how Jacob acknowledged God as the provider by willingly tithing to Him. . *Gen 28:22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.* This principle became enshrined in law and is in a manner of speaking a reminder that we are not to covet before God.

Tithing has a number of aspects

1. Levitical 1<sup>st</sup> tithe
2. Priestly tithe from the Levites to Aaron
3. (Festival) second tithe. (Joseph in Egypt)
4. Triennial Tithe

#### Levitical Tithe

The Levite had only cities (48 cities) for his possession, not land and so God's service was supported by the people. *Num 35:6 And among the cities which ye shall give unto the Levites there shall be six cities for refuge, which ye shall appoint for the manslayer, that he may flee thither: and to them ye shall add forty and two cities.*

Service was supported annually by the tithe, *Num 18:24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.* Heave offering, *Deu 18:1-2 The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and his inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the LORD is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them.....Deu 10:9 Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD is his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.*

This tithe and the need to provide cities is no longer valid in the New Testament as there are no longer Levites performing God's service... No one involved in the service of God's people in the NT has been given then title "Levite". Neither will you find "reverends", arch-bishops, arch-deacons, Popes, priests, holy fathers, or any other invented rank in Christ's church.

#### Priestly Tithe

The Priests were related to the Levites. *Exo 28:1 And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.* Moses and Aaron were both Levites. *Exo 4:14 And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not **Aaron the Levite thy brother?** I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart.* The Priests were a sub-family of the Levites and were headed by a High Priest.

*The Levites in turn had to support their brothers the priest by tithing the tithe that they received. Num 18:25-32 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even **a tenth part of the tithe**. And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fulness of the winepress. Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of **all your tithes, which ye receive** of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD'S heave offering to Aaron the priest. Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it. Therefore thou shalt say unto them, When ye have heaved the best thereof from it, then it shall be counted unto the Levites as the increase of the threshingfloor, and as the increase of the winepress. And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it is your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation. And ye shall bear no sin by reason of it, when ye have heaved from it the best of it: neither shall ye pollute the holy things of the children of Israel, lest ye die.*

Every year a tenth of the tenth went to Aaron and his sons. Aaron was God's representative so in a sense it was giving to God. This tithe also has gone and is not valid in the NT.

It is not clear how the tithe was collected and distributed. Did the Levites share it equally with each other? When David pursued the Amalekites, he taught us a lesson. *1Sa 30:21 And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. 1Sa 30:22 Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. 1Sa 30:23 Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.* David was equitable and it became a law in Israel. Israel was a 'common-wealth' for those engaged in the same tasks.

Yet we must consider what if the Levites did not do their job well and failed to bring sin to the attention of the people amongst whom they lived and the people lapsed into sin? What would the consequence of this be? According to Deuteronomy, they would have bad harvests. *Deu 28:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Deu 28:16 Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Deu 28:17 Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.*

The consequences of a poor harvest would result in a smaller tithe and it would rebound upon the Levites. They would get less. So in this case, would it be right for the other Levites to support the poorly performing brothers? To subsidise the indolent Levites. The Christian attitude suggests we do not support laziness. *2Th 3:10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.*

It would certainly have had more of an impact if the Levitical tithe was distributed locally.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Tithe (Festival)

This tithe was for enjoyment, rejoicing, a festive meal with God at His sanctuary. It promoted pilgrimage and fellowship. *Deu 12:17-19 Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand: But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto. Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite as long as thou livest upon the earth. Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always. And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: Then **shalt thou turn it into money**, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and **thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household**, And the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.*

This festival was an annual event. *Deu 14:22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year. Deu 14:23 And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always. Deu 14:24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; or if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee.*

The tithe, because of its bulk could be converted into money, so as to be more portable and be converted back at the destination into food and drink for celebration. God did not ban the use of alcohol, *Deu 14:26 And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household.*

This tithe no longer exists but perhaps was echoed in the church gathering for its communal meals.

## Triennial Tithe

This tithe would have occurred at the same time as the festival tithe every third year and embraced the wider and more disadvantaged community of Israel. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> year this tithe was to be in one's own gates for the use of the poor *Deu 26:12-15 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and **hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled**; Then thou shalt say before the LORD thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house,*

*and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me: I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them: I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, neither have I taken away ought thereof for any unclean use, nor given ought thereof for the dead: but I have hearkened to the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me. Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel, and the land which thou hast given us, as thou swarest unto our fathers, a land that floweth with milk and honey. It was collected and given in purity, undefiled..*

Now the question might arise, was the festival tithe taken out of the Levitical tithe, or was it separate and additional? Was the poor tithe taken out of the Levitical tithe or was that additional? I imagine that there were those who looked at their flocks as they looked at their tithes. Some would grudgingly give a poor specimen and others would joyfully give of their very best. Others would go, as we say, “the extra mile” and give more? After all, they did not own it, it was the Lord’s. Sometimes we have to make a clear distinction in our hearts between good stewardship and sheer avarice, flowing from our covetous nature. If the people of God were truly in need, what problem was there with giving two tithes on the third year?

Tithes could also be redeemed. *Lev 27 v 30 – 34 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD’S: it is holy unto the LORD. **And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth part thereof.** And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it: and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed. These are the commandments, which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel in mount Sinai. Why would this be allowed? Perhaps due to a bad harvest more grain was need to be kept back for the next year or even expansion of the farm? The persons savings could be substituted for the tithe but it was tithing plus 2/10<sup>th</sup> of a tithe.*

This, the second tithe covered the poor. Like gleaning it showed a respect for God’s law and His less well cared for creatures and it is exemplified by Boaz generosity; **Rth 2:1-12** *And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech. And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:*



There is an orthodox Jewish tradition of growing the hair long at the side of the head. *Lev 19:27 Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard.* They call the side-locks “peyot”. Although one is permitted to trim the peyot, some, especially in certain Chasidic circles, have the custom of never cutting their peyot. Throughout the ages, and most recently by the Nazis during the Holocaust, much animosity and torture was directed specifically at the Jewish peyote, for the peyot is a sign that differentiates and clearly marks the Jew. However, instead of being embarrassed by them, many Jews literally gave their lives for their peyot, staying proud Jews even to the last moment of their lives. Indeed, Yemenite Jews, instead of calling them peyot, call them simanim, “signs,” for they are signs that we proudly wear, proclaiming to all that we are Jewish.

The peyot perhaps like the phylacteries developed beyond their original intention as a reminder of duty to God and ones neighbour. *Lev 19:9 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap **the corners** (הַכַּף = pē’âh) of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.* The peyote was a reminder to be generous and not covetous. *Lev 23:22 And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not make clean riddance of **the corners** of thy field when thou reapest, neither shalt thou gather any gleanings of thy harvest: thou shalt leave them unto the poor, and to the stranger: I am the LORD your God.* Remember the poor, which Paul says he was always wont to do.

#### Should we Tithe today?

Should we tithe now? Well the priesthood of Levi has ended, that is the first tithe. Tithing is not mentioned in the NT churches, rather it is premeditated giving for the saints. *1Co 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 1Co 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.* With respect to our Christian giving:

1. We should not be less generous than the Jews,
2. We should give for the right reasons as a delight, *2Co 9:7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.*
3. We should support God’s work and those who might be clearly called to work full time but we note that the Apostle Paul had an occupation and did not burden the Church.
4. It may on occasion be required of us to give more than the OT saints gave.

So the answer is no, we do not tithe but we give. As a ceremonial principle tithing ceases. As a moral illustration of the 10<sup>th</sup> Command it stands. The following discussion is taken from “Jesus the Healer” (2016 MAW).

Perhaps one of the most misquoted texts of scripture is the one in which Jesus says of acts of love, “you did it unto me”. The scene is set on the great day of judgement. The works that men did are laid bare before the Christ. The things that people did for Christ are revealed. *Mat 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: Mat 25:35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Mat 25:36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I*

was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Although Jesus was not always in plain sight there were those who would receive blessings on His behalf. They were His people in prison, His people in poverty, His people in need and when they received help it was as if they were wearing the mantle of Christ, taking it on behalf of Christ.

Now could we say for example, that visiting an unrepentant murderous rapist in a prison was an act of visiting Christ? How could we identify Christ in such a person who fights against all Christ stands for? Many people incorrectly think that all good works to mankind are works to Christ. They appeal to Matthew chapter 24 and suggest that any good deed is a deed to Christ. That is not what we are taught. Mat 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. It does not say because you have done it to all mankind you did it to me.

Unfortunately, the term brother has come to mean any other human being these days. "Am I not a man and a brother" stated the antislavery poster. No you are not, I say, unless you are in the family of Christ. The biblical brother is different from the world's brother. Mat 12:47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. Mat 12:48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? Mat 12:49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

When Jesus says that things were done to "the least of these my brethren", He did not mean humanity as a whole. He had in mind Christians. If people think that when they do charitable works to unbelievers that they are doing it to Christ, they are mistaken. Do not fool yourself into thinking that you are doing things to Christ, if you are not doing them for His people. By all means give and be generous but do not think that giving to unbelievers is giving to God. But more than that, what will we say to Christ when He asks us what we did with His resources? How will we explain that we were more generous to the world than to His children, that we gave more to the unbeliever and neglected our brothers and sisters? How will we answer? Should we leave our inheritance to unbelievers and unbelieving children rather than Christians? I have made a choice that I will not leave anything to the unbeliever.

So what should we give to? Even Our Lord does not tell us what to give to, other than that, He loves a cheerful giver. He punishes mean and deceitful givers (Ananias and Sapphira). *Gal 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Gal 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.* We need to think carefully as to what that good is.

The saints should be at the top of our giving list. 1Co 16:1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 1Co 16:2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath

prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. Giving was not a 'lastminute.com' thought, pass the hat around when the Apostle arrives, it was a considered issue outside of meetings. By the way, I do not think that Christians should fund their work from unbeliever's contributions. Only those who have been united with Christ and His church by personal faith in Jesus Christ should give to the people of God and the work of God. In the Bible, every command or exhortation to give, is addressed to believers not unbelievers. 3Jn 1:6 They have told the church about your love. They say you were good enough to welcome them and to send them on their mission in a way that God's servants deserve. 3Jn 1:7 When they left to tell others about the Lord, they decided not to accept help from anyone who wasn't a follower.....2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? 2Co 6:15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?

Should we give to every "chugger" that rattles a tin in front of us? Should we give to Dog's homes, abandoned donkeys, Oxfam, NSPCC, Red Cross, Trussell Trust, Red Nose day or whatever? It is your choice. Yet I must emphasise again that our first duty is to our brothers and sisters in need and whatever we have is not ours but loaned by the Lord. How will I answer to God for my neglect of His people not just because I was mean but because I did more for the unbeliever? I will no doubt be unpopular and called "unloving" but I do not see that the church has been tasked to rehabilitate the unbelieving world with charity shops. The world has brought its own misery upon itself because it has rejected Christ and made its own rules for life. Redemption does not come through a food bank.

When the prophet Agabus was warned about a famine, he did not set up a worldly institution, the Red Cross of his day, to cater for the unbelievers, Act 11:28 And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Act 11:29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: Act 11:30 Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. The Christians took care of the believers. The unbelievers will take care of their own.

I think that we have lost sight of the great divide between those who believe and those who do not believe. We are not the same. We have been called out, called Saints, a peculiar people, a Royal Priesthood, a chosen generation a people fit for God. However, because many so called "Christians" live lives that differ little from those who are unbelievers, they see them as the same as themselves. In their minds the difference between the two is that one group think that they are believers and the other group do not but apart from that they are the same. Well, pick up your Bible and read it again.

### Covetousness and the new testament

The NT approach to charity and wealth is little different to the OT. Recall that the OT did not teach indifference to the neighbour. The neighbour and his needs were as valid and important as yours. Our "neighbour" is not the man next door, unless he is a believer. Neighbours are believers and

unbelievers are enemies of the Gospel (see our comments in Ch.8 The devil's lie. "Jesus and Healing". 2016).

Duties to our brothers (and sisters) are shown by our care not just for them but also their property. *Deu 22:1 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. Deu 22:2 And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. Deu 22:3 In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself. Deu 22:4 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.* This holds true in the NT.

Our own interests and needs often override and mask the events around us that are of greater importance. We only really begin to sympathise with others when similar events touch us personally. The mother who loses her child sympathises with the family who lost theirs. The devil recognises that selfishness in us and plays upon it like a fiddle. *Job 2:4 And Satan answered the LORD, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.* This is a true and satanic fact about the fallen man, but it should not be manifest in the new creature

Selfishness and greed will stifle our development and covetousness is well mixed in those attitudes. We saw that the line that divided good from evil was marked "covetousness". *1Ti 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* It is the direction of our heart to money that makes it sinful and the axe that is laid at the root of that tree cuts deeply into our covetousness. *Luk 3:9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.* The proof of repentance in the Covenant Nation was to be one seen in the fruits. *Luk 3:11 He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise. Luk 3:12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? Luk 3:13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. Luk 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.*

John highlights sharing one's goods, sharing food, being honest in business and content with your income, all of which can be impacted negatively by covetousness. Contentment is a rule of the Kingdom. *Heb 13:5 Let your conversation be without covetousness; and **be content with such things as ye have**: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee!* Community and equity governed the attitude to ownership in the early church. *Act 2:44 And all that believed were together, and had all things common.*

Is this a pattern for the church in all ages? Why not? Yet I imagine that when you look around at the lack of commitment and laziness among many so called Christians, you say to yourself, why on earth would I share with those wasters? Perhaps the willingness to share goods and chattels reflected that the early church all had the same level of commitment. *Act 2:42 And **they continued stedfastly in the***

***apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*** Act 2:43 And fear came upon **every soul**: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. There are a lot of things that the Apostles taught that we have thrown out today (hair coverings, believers baptism, heterosexual marriage and so on). It is clear that many churches today are bastard churches because they do not have their family in the New Testament saints.

### Covetousness and servitude

Next I shall endeavour to explain a controversial aspect of a possession mentioned in the 10<sup>th</sup> command. It would appear that this 10<sup>th</sup> command accepts slavery and puts a male or female slave as part of a man's possessions and is clearly quite acceptable under the law. Menservants and maidservants, or slaves, or bondmen, whatever you wish to call them, are all people who have become the possessions of another person. They have to a degree, lost their freedom or perhaps better put, have had their freedom curtailed by their circumstances.

Why consider it, is it relevant for today? Certainly, because as we shall see, slavery in one form or another is still with us. It is a subject that is often surrounded by passion and emotion and as such has been the cause of wars and divisions in churches and nations.

Servitude existed in other cultures outside of Israel. Aristotle suggested that the ultimate elements of a household were, master and slave, husband and wife, father and children. Slavery then, even by the nations was considered as much a part of the order of society as any other relationship. It is really over the last few hundred years that the issue became of great importance. It seems to have come into prominence with the Industrial Revolution, when two camps (for and against) were formed. The abolitionist programme eventually worked out in two phases.

1. The abolition of the Trade (1807) and then
2. the abolition of Slavery itself (1833).

The following brief account is taken from the BBC history site:

The history of British anti-slavery can be divided into a number of distinct phases. The first of these stretched from 1787 to 1807 and was directed against the **slave trade**. Of course, there had been initiatives before this date. The Quakers, for instance, petitioned Parliament against the slave trade as early as 1783 and a similar petition was submitted in 1785, this time from the inhabitants of Bridgwater in Somerset. But by and large these were piecemeal efforts, involving a relatively small number of people. It was the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, organised in May 1787, which set the movement on its modern course, evolving a structure and organisation that made it possible to mobilise thousands of Britons.

The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade or, to be more precise, the Society's guiding London Committee, was the prototype of the 19th-century reform organisation. Its self-appointed task was to create a constituency for British anti-slavery through the distribution of abolitionist books, pamphlets, prints and artefacts. The Committee also had its own network of local contacts ('agents' and 'country committees') scattered across the length and breadth of the country. And, finally, there was Thomas Clarkson, a sort of 'travelling agent', who provided a vital link between London and the provinces,

organising committees, distributing tracts and offering advice and encouragement to hundreds of grass-roots activists.

These different activities culminated in two nationwide petition campaigns. In the first of these, in 1788, over 100 petitions attacking the slave trade were presented to the House of Commons in the space of just three months. The campaign of 1792 was more ambitious still. In all, 519 petitions were presented to the Commons, the largest number ever submitted to the House on a single subject or in a single session, but just as important as the size of the campaign was its range and diversity. While the industrial north provided the most enthusiastic support for abolition, every English county was represented in 1792, in addition to which Scotland and Wales made significant contributions.

Through the means of mass petitioning William Wilberforce, who led the campaign in the Commons, hoped to exert pressure on Parliament to abolish the slave trade. The strategy almost worked; in 1792 the House resolved by 230 votes to 85 that the trade ought to be gradually abolished. But petitioning on this scale was always likely to cause alarm in the minds of men with one eye on events in France. Ultimately, radicalism was to prove the Achilles heel of the early abolitionist movement. The rising tide of revolutionary violence in France and, with it, the growth of political reaction at home, inevitably took its toll. In 1793 the Commons refused to revive the subject of the slave trade, effectively reversing the resolutions of the previous year.

Ironically, however, war in Europe helped to prepare the way for final victory. The acquisition of new territories in the West Indies, notably Trinidad, Berbice, and Demerara, led many of the old planter élite, who were increasingly fearful of competition, to desert the anti-abolitionist ranks. Capitalising on this change of heart and the entry into Parliament of a batch of new liberal Irish MPs, the abolitionists in 1804 renewed their campaign. In 1805 a Bill providing for the abolition of the slave trade to conquered territories triumphantly passed both Houses. The following year this was superseded by a stronger measure that outlawed the British Atlantic slave trade altogether.

After 1807 British anti-slavery entered a new phase. The Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade gave way to the African Institution, whose principal aim was to ensure that the new legislation was enforced and that other countries followed Britain's example. The first of these objectives was soon realised. Persuading other countries to join Britain in outlawing the slave trade proved more difficult, however. Despite the efforts of the African Institution, and those of British ministers, the Congresses of Paris (1814) and Vienna (1815) both failed to reach specific agreement, not least because of French opposition. The results of the Aix la Chapelle Congress in 1818 were equally unsatisfactory.

The failure of the British to sway foreign powers forced abolitionists to rethink their ideas. So, too, did reports from the West Indies which suggested that conditions on the plantations had hardly improved since 1807. The situation seemed to call for more direct action, namely an attack on the institution of slavery itself.

In 1823 some of the leading members of the African Institution, including, Clarkson, Wilberforce, and Zachary Macaulay, organised a new body, the Anti-Slavery Society. Modest in its ambitions, at least by later standards, the Anti-Slavery Society called for the adoption of measures to improve slave conditions in the West Indies, together with a plan for gradual emancipation leading ultimately to complete freedom.

Like the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, the Anti-Slavery Society was a national organisation with its own network of local and regional auxiliaries. And like earlier organisations, its leaders endorsed mass petitioning. In fact, between 1828 and 1830 Parliament was deluged by over 5000 petitions calling for the gradual abolition (and mitigation) of slavery. But progress in the Commons was slow and halting. Finally, in 1831 some of the Anti-Slavery Society's younger and more radical elements organised the Agency Committee (which formally separated from the parent body in 1832). Revivalist in tone, the Agency Committee took abolition out into the country. More controversially, it also committed itself to the unconditional and immediate abolition of slavery.

For obvious reasons, the Agency Committee was ideally placed to exploit the struggle over the reform of Parliament and to win over voters newly enfranchised by the Reform Act of 1832. Its efforts paid off. The first reformed Parliament was clearly sympathetic to abolition; perhaps just as important the Cabinet was ready to accept emancipation. In May 1833 Lord Stanley presented a plan to Parliament which finally passed into law on August 29<sup>th</sup>. In essence, the new legislation called for the gradual abolition of slavery. Everyone over the age of six on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1834, when the law went into effect, was required to serve an apprenticeship of four years in the case of domestics and six years in the case of field hands (apprenticeship was later abolished by Parliament in 1838). By way of compensation the West Indian planters received £20 million.

The issues hinged around abuse of the individual rights, oppression, extortion, suppression, cruelty, vice, etc, and the humanitarian aspect of equality without order. The United States adopted a gradualist approach to emancipation but not all states implemented it and as a consequence suffered its bloodiest conflict 30 years later.

Are all men equal in the eyes of God? It depends on how you view equity. We may all enjoy the sun and the rain of God's providence but we do not all enjoy the mercy of His forgiveness. Equality is defined within personal circumstances and the whole issue can only be resolved by examining God's teaching. Again we must go back to our sole authority and stand ourselves on Scripture.

#### Servitude and its origins.

Servitude or subordination was a punishment for sin and Canaan suffered because he looked at his 'exposed' father. He became a subordinate to his brothers. *Gen 9:27 God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.* Abram acquired servants although it is not clear what the circumstances were. *Gen 12:5 And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, **and the souls that they had gotten in Haran**; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*



Jacob put himself into servitude because of love. *Gen 29:15 And Laban said unto Jacob, Because thou art my brother, shouldest thou therefore serve me for nought? tell me, what shall thy wages be? Gen 29:16 And Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. Gen 29:17 Leah was tender eyed; but Rachel was beautiful and well favoured. Gen 29:18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, **I will serve thee seven years for Rachel** thy younger daughter.*

Adam's relationship to his Creator was one of servitude. *Gen 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.* God was the owner, man was the tenant farmer serving the owner. Adam's sin caused his eviction.

There are clearly many ways that men become slaves:

1. **By war as spoil.** *Deu 28:68 And the LORD shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships, by the way whereof I spake unto thee, Thou shalt see it no more again: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.*
2. **By deceit and theft.** *Gen 37:28 Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt.*
3. **By Crime.** *Exo 22:3 If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. Theft and its restitution*
4. **By necessity – Poverty and debt.** *Lev 25:39 And if thy brother that dwelleth by thee be waxen poor, and be sold unto thee; thou shalt not compel him to serve as a bondservant.*
5. **Protection.** *Jos 9:22 And Joshua called for them, and he spake unto them, saying, Wherefore have ye beguiled us, saying, We are very far from you; when ye dwell among us? Jos 9:23 Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God.*
6. **Through parents.** *Neh 5:5 Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards. Exo 21:7 And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do.*
7. **By love as a hired servant.** *Gen 29:18 And Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter.*

It becomes apparent that by circumstance people can become property, and as such is regarded as money *Exo 21:21 Notwithstanding, if he continue a day or two, he shall not be punished: **for he is his money.*** As such they are transferable commodities. *Lev 25:46 And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, **to inherit them for a possession;** they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.*

### The year of release

There were however different rules to the home born or Israelite and the foreigner *Exo 21:2 If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and **in the seventh he shall go out free** for nothing.* The home born was given release after a fixed period. For the woman it was slightly modified perhaps because of her tenderness. *Exo 21:7 And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she*

*shall not go out as the menservants do. Exo 21:8 If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her. Exo 21:9 And if he have betrothed her unto his son, he shall deal with her after the manner of daughters.*

Servitude or slavery had its limits *Deu 15:12 And if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years; then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. Deu 15:13 And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: Deu 15:14 Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: of that wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. Deu 15:15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day.*

### Perpetual servitude

Servitude was not necessarily all bad. Some servants loved their masters and were quite content to remain servants forever. *Exo 21:5 And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: he was ceremonially and judicially bound to his master for life. Exo 21:6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever.* The typical parallel is of permanent service to God as in *Psa 40:6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.*

I think that this perpetual service is a type of Christian service to the Lord. *Jas 1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.* All Christians are servant to their Lord and to each other. *Mat 23:11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.* One wonders what effect this biblical attitude would have had on the commercial slave trade and whether slavery would have ever been abolished if it had been adopted.

### Freedom

So as to emphasise the Divine ownership, the land Lord caused all property to revert to its original distribution. *Lev 25:10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.* It is a Sabbath of Sabbaths (7 x 7 years) and a proclamation of liberty to captives.

### Value of a slave

The slave had a value similar to that of the Servant Jesus who Judas weighed silver for. *Exo 21:32 If the ox shall push a manservant or a maidservant; he shall give unto their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned.* The slave's members were as valuable as the whole person. *Exo 21:26 And if a man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish; he shall let him go free for his eye's sake.* He was one body and his members as valuable as the whole. *1Co 12:24 For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:*

His humanity was not to be abused and if he were ill used, the master could suffer, *Exo 21:20 And if a man smite his servant, or his maid, with a rod, and he die under his hand; he shall be surely punished.* Cruelty was not encouraged.

The rule then was not to oppress these slaves *Lev 25:46 And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, **ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.** Deu 24:14 **Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant** that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that are in thy land within thy gates:* If by virtue of oppression one escaped he was not bound to go back *Deu 23:15 Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee.* In light of this, Onesimus (Philemon 11) must have been in the wrong not the master.

We see then in the OT that slavery was part of the Theocracy and was very humane when God's laws were observed. It gives us an insight into handling human service in an honourable way. The modern parallels in communism, state service are different and bring their own sordid forms of oppression.

We are just beginning to see the other swing of the pendulum in the journey of labour. The servants are now oppressing and extorting their masters by the formation of unions who have gone far beyond their original aims. The masters are now the slaves but the same sins are manifest. Greed, lust, envy, striving, in short works of the flesh.

#### Emancipation is not a goal of the church.

The NT does not move to erase slavery. The comments it makes are for the proper values (moral) to be observed in this form of service *Eph 6:5 **Servants, be obedient** to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, **as unto Christ**; Eph 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; **but as the servants of Christ**, doing the will of God from the heart; Eph 6:7 With good will doing service, **as to the Lord**, and not to men: Eph 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Eph 6:9 And, ye **masters, do the same things unto them**, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.*

Paul accepts servitude but the faults lie not in service, but in the attitude to it adopted by both servant and master. God did not think it wrong to allow a slave owner to have an assembly in his house (Philemon 1). After separating the ceremonial aspects there are rules for keeping and maintaining service. Nowhere does scripture move to obliterate slavery as an institution. We should though as Christians be working towards that brotherly love which would secure freedom after appropriate service. It is not a matter for civil legislation, but for the individual conscience sufficiently educated by Scripture, to give a "heart" release not a "hand" release. We may at times mitigate external evil, but the heart remains unaltered. The NT aims at men's hearts with justice, mercy and truth applied. The pro slavery lobby never considered a 7 year release or killing the kidnapper.

## African slavery

The west is often blamed for the evils of the slave trade, as if Africa was a victim of wicked colonial powers. This is a lie. Slavery existed for centuries in Africa as part of the culture<sup>4</sup>.

From North to South, and from East to West, the African continent became intimately connected with black slavery both as one of the principal areas in the world where slavery was common, and also as a major source of slaves for ancient civilization, the medieval world and all the continents of the modern period.

In West Africa slavery, was known among many of the states and societies. For example the Mende and Temne of Sierra Leone, the Vai of Liberia and Sierra Leone, and virtually all the states and societies in Guinea, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Dahomey, Mali, Nigeria etc. In Central Africa slavery was practiced in much of Bantu Africa for example among the Duala of Cameroon; the Bakongo, Bapende Luba and Lunda of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Congo and part of Angola, and the Lozi of Zambia. In East Africa the Buganda state, the Nyamwezi and the Chagga peoples practiced slavery. Along the coast, the Mrima Arabs, Omani Arabs and the Swahilis practiced slavery. In Southern Africa the Cokwe of Angola, the Sena of Mozambique and the Ngoni people scattered across East, Central and Southern Africa were all familiar with the institution of slavery.

There were two dimensions to slavery and the slave trade in pre-colonial Africa, an external and internal dimension. The external dimension involved trade across the Sahara, the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Arabic and Indian ocean worlds. This trade began in ancient times and continued into the modern period. Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome used African slaves. Medieval Europe and the Arabic and Islamic world, and the continent of Asia made use of African slaves. On the islands of the Eastern Mediterranean African slaves could be found working with slaves from Asia Minor, Greece, the Balkans, Eastern and Northern Europe.

In the early modern period the picture was very much the same. What is interesting in the ancient, medieval and early modern period is the existence of not only black and white slaves working together but also the prevalence of three main forms of labour not limited to colour, i.e. slave labour, indentured labour and serfdom.

There were five main ways by which slaves were obtained both internal use and external demand. These were warfare, market supply, raiding and kidnapping, tribute and pawning.

Prisoners of war were enslaved and they usually constituted the largest proportion of the total slave output. Warfare was rife among the savannah and forest states of West, East, Central and Southern Africa. The jihads of the 19th century, waged from Senegambia in the west to the Red Sea in the east resulted in the enslavement of thousands of people.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.accessgambia.com/information/slavery-sub-saharan-africa.html>

Many markets were established along the length and breadth of the continent and members of royalty as well as free individuals could go to any of these markets to purchase slaves. The famous markets were those established along the caravan routes. In North and West Africa all the markets along the trans-Saharan routes were important suppliers of slaves. In West Africa some of the popular markets were Salaga, Yendi, Bole and Wa in Ghana; Bonduku and Buna in Ivory Coast, and Ouagadougou in modern Burkina Faso. In the North Eastern part of the continent Egypt and the Sudan had slave markets.

The popular markets along the East, Central and Southern trade routes were Tabora, Ujiji and Karagwe. The Nyamwezi people controlled the Central route and all the markets along the route, while the Yao people controlled the Southern route and all the markets along the route.

Having worked in West Africa, I was surprised to find that many local families were historically, actively involved in the slave trade. Their ancestors were buyers and sellers of slaves. While their descendents come back to Africa to find their “roots”, the truth is that they were sold off to the traders by their ancestors. Not many of these slave descendents want to share life in Africa with their modern descendents and few appreciate that slavery was an every day part of life.

The European traders seldom ventured inland, in the countries that came to be known as the “white man’s graveyard”, mosquitoes and disease saw to that. The slaves were taken to the coastal ports where the transport waited. We might argue that if the indigenous Africans had not provided a steady supply of slaves, then the trade would have been diminished greatly. My point is that there is culpability on both sides, by the Africans and the Europeans.

Despite the European efforts to abolish slavery and the trade, it none the less continued. I discovered that “pawn” slavery continued well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pawnage or pawn slavery is a form of servitude akin to bonded labor under which the debtor provides another human being as security or collateral for the debt. Until the debt (including interest on it) is paid off, the creditor has the use of the labor of the pawn. It still exists in India and Pakistan. How did the colonialists deal with abolition?

#### **Post Abolition:**

While we can talk of the year 1807 as the year Britain passed a law abolishing the Atlantic slave trade in Britain and all its colonial possessions and therefore most of Africa was affected, we cannot say the same with respect to the Internal/ Indigenous system of slavery. Every country had a different date passed by its colonial master. In Ghana for example internal slavery and slave trading was abolished in 1874 by the British Colonial Government in the Gold Coast Colony. This was the southernmost part of Ghana marked by the Pra river. In Asante and the Northern Territories it was not until 1908.

There were immediate and long term effects of abolition in Ghana. The immediate effects were that first, freed slaves who could readily trace their relatives, and families which could trace their enslaved relatives appealed to the British District

Commissioners' Courts for redemption of their relatives after payment of a fee. Second, some freed slaves settled on Christian Mission Stations, especially the Basel Mission Stations at Agogo and Kumasi. Third, other slaves left their former owners to begin lives on their own. Fourth, the majority of freed slaves remained in the households of their former owners under new terms and conditions. In the long term, freed slaves and their descendants were assimilated into the families to which they were already associated.

Was slavery really the issue or was it racial superiority? Abraham Lincoln could see that a Union victory in the Civil war would not remove racial prejudice.

Newly released documents show that to a greater degree than historians had previously known, President Lincoln laid the groundwork to ship freed slaves overseas to help prevent racial strife in the U.S.

Just after he issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, Lincoln authorized plans to pursue a freedmen's settlement in present-day Belize and another in Guyana, both colonial possessions of Great Britain at the time, said Phillip W. Magness, one of the researchers who uncovered the new documents.

Charles Darwin, whose works laid the foundation for racial superiority and a master race, used his evolutionist hypothesis to press the claim that some races are inferior.

Darwin demonstrated how he believed evolution shaped man in his subsequent book *The Descent of Man*. In it, he theorized that man, having evolved from apes, had continued evolving as various races, with some races more developed than others. Darwin classified his own white race as more advanced than those "lower organisms" such as pygmies, and he called different people groups "savage," "low," and "degraded."

Darwin wasn't the first to propose biological arguments for racism, but his works fueled the most ugly and deadly racism. Even evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould wrote, "Biological arguments for racism may have been common before 1859, but they increased by orders of magnitude following the acceptance of evolutionary theory" (*Ontogeny and Phylogeny*, 1977).

Slavery, servitude or bondage, whatever you wish to term it, failed to show respect for that fundamental truth. That humanity, whatever condition that it is found in, bears the image of God.

Have we Christians fallen into that trap that makes us think that we are superior by virtue of our education, upbringing, colour, ethnicity and heritage? Then we are no different to the ancient slavers.

In our modern world, slavery still exists in the form of exploitation and oppression of the poor. In 2007, the bi-centennial of the abolition of the slave trade, I presented a paper to the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transportation in Accra (Appendix 1). My thesis was that instead of taking

the labour (slaves) to the factories and furnaces of manufacture like ancient slave traders, we now take the materials to the slaves in their poor countries and we dump our waste and filth into their countries. We Christians continue to exploit cheap labour to feed our covetous life styles but doing it so remotely, we are less likely to prick our consciences.

#### Slavery spiritually observed.

We look now from temporal servitude to its implications in the spiritual realm. It is particularly relevant to this command as you will see. We are not to covet because there remains something better for us than this world. If a Christian loves this life too much, if he covets it and its possessions, he has made himself a slave. *Luk 18:22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me. Luk 18:23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. Luk 18:24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* The ruler, by hanging on to this life he had made it impossible to grasp the next.

The Christian is a freeman in Christ, freed from the law of sin and death. *Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Heb 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* This is the spiritual counterpart to earthly servitude.

The spiritual teaching of the Jubilee is that we “own nothing in this world. *Lev 25:8 And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Lev 25:9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. Lev 25:10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.*

What was the Jubilee? The word means a “trumpet blast” (יובל = yôbêl the blast of a horn). It is the sound that signalled the end of an era, a time of change, a time when freedom is proclaimed. It will echo for the last time when Christ descends with a shout and the sound of a trumpet. It is a reminder that we own nothing, *Job 1:21 And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.*

The Jubilee is brought to our attention when Jesus enters the synagogue in Nazareth and read from Isaiah. *Luk 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to **preach deliverance to the captives**, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.*

Ancient Israel eventually paid the price for their disobedience. They were exiled because they refused to honour the land Sabbath. *2Ch 36:21 To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.* Perhaps it was due to covetousness that they tried to claw back the tithes (see above). Instead of resting the land, learning to have a longer Sabbath with the Lord, they



spent the time making wealth. Perhaps many did not pay at the time but they left it as an inheritance to their distant children to pick up. They would enjoy it at the Lord's pleasure, in Babylon.

After the captivity, Israel never returned to her former glory. Many tribes had disappeared into Syria, never to be heard of again. The land of Israel had new foreign owners and apart from a few claims (Joseph to Bethlehem of Judah), the old system of Jubilees could no longer take place as it once had. Perhaps the providence behind this change was such that the people of God, the Israel of God would no longer focus on this world as home? From now on, heaven and its kingdom would be our inheritance. We are citizens of Zion.

*Heb 12:22 But **YE ARE COME** unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, Heb 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

We must ask ourselves if as Christians, we really believe that we are free citizens of another Kingdom? If we have come out of the land of bondage, then why do we still live as if we are still in the land of Egypt. Why are the things of this world still the main focus of our attention? The truth is that many people want the best of both worlds. They want a foot in the world's camp and a foot in the heavenly camp. A life of compromise.

One of the proofs of this assertion is the fact that so few Christians get involved in Christian activities. Instead, they pay for service providers and managers. They pay people to organise their weekly worship, their Bible studies, their devotional time, and others to organise and spend their donations. They are content to sit week after week in some holding pattern, without asking the Lord what they should personally be doing for the Kingdom. This is covetousness.

*1Jn 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 1Jn 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 1Jn 2:17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*

The martyred missionary Jim Elliot said, "Wherever you are, be all there! Live to the hilt every situation you believe to be the will of God." and "When it comes time to die – make sure that all you have to do is die". That is good advice. We should not be entangled in this life when the time comes to leave.

### Covetousness and fair trade

How we conduct our business can be another indication of covetousness in us. Christians should be fair in business and in this the Society of Friends or Quakers, as they are known, set an example. In an age where people bartered for goods, it was "how much could you get?" for what you were selling, not necessarily what the goods were worth. The Quakers were amongst the first to set a firm price for goods. The Quakers also aimed to give their customers value for money.

People appreciated that, they knew where they stood with Quaker businessmen. They were of course in business to make a livelihood, but not at the expense of customers or employees. This ethical approach gave Quaker retailers a competitive advantage over their resentful rivals because their customers knew they were not being cheated and did not have to haggle to get a fair price.

Quakers knew that a healthy workforce was a productive workforce, and employed doctors and dentists at a time when there was still child labour in Britain. Cadbury, which built the village of Bournville for its workers complete with schools, leisure facilities and parks, was amongst the first firms to make pension provisions and provide a canteen.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, non-conformists (Quakers, Baptist and Methodists) were barred from universities. You had to be a practising Anglican to take a degree and as a result professions such as medicine or the law were not open to them, which explains why so many gravitated towards business and commerce.

In the UK, household names today were founded by Quakers, Barclays and Lloyds banks, Clarks shoes, Bryant & May matches and the biscuit firms Huntley & Palmers and Carrs are just a few of their companies. When it came to confectionery, there was virtual monopoly for more than a century, led by Cadbury of Birmingham, Fry's of Bristol and Rowntree's and Terry's of York. The move into chocolate began with cocoa drinks in the 19th Century as a reaction against the perceived misery and deprivation caused by alcohol.

Quakers and other non-conformists at the time were concerned about levels of alcohol misuse in the population at large and they were part of the temperance movement. Cocoa was a way of providing cheap and available beverage. It was healthy because you had to boil the water to make it at a time when they did not have good water supplies.

There was a friendly rivalry between the manufacturers, many of whom started out as general grocers, but also a fraternity and there were also strong networks between them. They knew one another from their church-based life, and because of the way they had been excluded and persecuted on the edge of society so there was a strong sense they should help each other out.

The Quakers are an example of Christians in business and an example those greedy and covetous profiteers of our age.

We shall examine three aspects of trade:

1. Just balances
2. Interest/pledges
3. Corban.

### Just balances

Our Lord echoes the words of Jeremiah when He scourges the Temple. *Jer 7:8 Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Jer 7:9 Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other God's whom ye know not; Jer 7:10 And come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these*

*abominations? Jer 7:11 Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? Behold, even I have seen it, saith the LORD.*

The people of God were to be a people of pierced ears and open eyes when it came to the law but they disobeyed. *Jer 6:13 For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.* This springs from an unrighteous heart out of which greed, self satisfaction, dissatisfaction, laziness, dishonesty, adultery, thievery, fraud, envy, killing, over indulgence, mistrust spew out.

A “just balance” is a set of scales that have been forged in the fire of God’s righteousness. The pans hang level when they are empty. The weights that will go in the pans have been forged in the sanctuary of God, *Num 7:13 And his offering was one silver charger, **the weight** thereof was an hundred and thirty shekels, one silver bowl of seventy shekels, after **the shekel of the sanctuary**; both of them were full of fine flour mingled with oil for a meat offering.*



This shekel was the standard for trade in Israel and it is similar to the standard weights held in Paris. The International Bureau of Weights and Measures (Bureau international des poids et mesures), is one of three such organisations established to maintain the International System of Units (SI) under the terms of the Metre Convention. You could compare weights in use today against this standard, just as you could take any weight in Israel to the sanctuary and you could place it in one pan of a set of scales and see if it balanced against the standard shekel. You were commanded to use these just balances and it was a practical mark of godliness, *Pro 16:11 A just weight and balance are the LORD'S: all the weights of the bag are his work.*

Fair trade extends beyond weights and balances, *Lev 19:35 "Don't be corrupt when administering justice concerning length, weight, or measuring liquid. Lev 19:36 Use honest scales, honest weights, and honest measures. I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt. GW. God knowing the thoughts and intent of our hearts, instructed us to be just, Deu 25:13 Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small.* We are to be consistent in our dealings.

Deceit is as much as a tool as false weights. Beware of using different measures, weights and cups in your dealings, sticking weights under the pan of your balance, giving short measure. Even a packet that is bigger than its contents to make a person think it is good value, sweets with holes and short change. Advertising can also be a tool of the false balance by making claims for a product or service that overstate its capability.

Cheating for some people is a way of life. King Henry the 8<sup>th</sup> was a cheat (as well as being a fornicating adulterer). In 1526 he needed money to pay for the wars against Scotland and France. His Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey, decided to debase the coinage (mix the precious metals of silver and gold with cheaper ones) so that he could make more coins for the same amount of precious metal and therefore mint more money at less cost.

Before debasing began, the face value of coinage was practically the same as its bullion value. As Henry increased the copper content of his silver coins, they eventually contained more copper than

silver. By the end of Henry VIII's reign the bullion value of his coins was around 25% of their face value.

Debasement caused prices to go up to compensate for the fact that money was worth less. People began to hoard older coins for their higher precious metal content. Foreign bankers and merchants became reluctant to accept coins and requested payment in gold only. The thin layer of silver on coins often wore off where the King's nose appeared, revealing the cheaper copper beneath. This prompted Henry's subjects to give him the less than complimentary nickname of 'Old Coppernose'.

This has led to the observation that "Bad money chases out good money" and is one of the roots of inflation. It is the way that Governments cheat their citizens. They print money that has no real value behind it and call it quantitative easing. If you or I did that we would be called forgers. By this the governments spend money that it has not derived from trade or production but by deceit.

Cheating was at the heart of Israel's unfaithfulness. *Isa 1:21 How is the faithful city become an harlot! it was full of judgment; righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Isa 1:22 Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water:* The fondness for silver over the fondness for justice is where the rot sets in. *1Ti 6:10 For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

False balances can also be applied to the measure we give for our labour. Do we work honestly, give a day's work for a day's pay or do we give short measure, short hours? *Col 3:22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; **not with eyeservice**, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:* Working only when the manager is around so that he is tricked into thinking that he sees you working (eye service) is condemned.

Perhaps this verse also gives us the true perspective on our dealings. *Eph 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but **as the servants of Christ**, doing the will of God from the heart;* Whatever we engage in, we should adopt an attitude that we are working for Christ.

We are also I suggest, to learn to give like God gives. *Luk 6:38 Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.* He gives us that bit more because He is a generous Lord. I know a Christian man who some years ago sold his car with a full tank of fuel. The buyer was surprised to see that the fuel gauge registered a full tank. He thought that gauge must have been broken because no one normally sells a car with a full tank.

So often our covetousness will deceive us into thinking that we are being generous when we are not. People who give old clothes to charity shops to deceive themselves that they are charitable, people who disguise cheap gifts as expensive to make themselves appear generous, people who pass on presents that someone else gave them. I even heard of a person who kept an expensive wine bottle into which they poured cheap wine, to make the guests think that they were being treated well.

Service in the Old Testament had a sacrificial element. Covetousness would deprive God of the best sacrifices. *Mal 1:8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and*

*sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts.* They had double standards or false balance.

How do just balances work in the churches today? Are we really giving just measures? If you look at the number of teachings in the NT that have been adulterated or removed entirely, you will see that God and the people are being short changed. If, for example, women are to cover their heads in prayer (because of the angels) yet these bob haired harlots have cast it aside. *1Co 11:6 For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered.* This is not an arbitrary rule, it is a mark of respect for the created order but it is a reflection on our age that we have even lost that vestige of respect.

We mix dross with the silver, we mix the world standards with God's and we jig about singing choruses about how great God is. But He is not that great that we should obey Him. *Co 5:11 But now I have written unto you **not to keep company**, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no **not to eat**.* No, we shall disobey with impunity and mix ourselves with our own deceptions.

Fraud is rife in the worldly churches and we should heed the prophet, *Rev 18:4 And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

Listen to this very carefully. If a person who calls themselves a Christian will cheat God, they will have no qualms about cheating you. If they cheat in the truth of God's word, they will cheat in the doing of it. Take heed, few find the Kingdom.

### Interest and pledges

The Israelite was to avoid being in debt to the unbeliever. *Deu 15:6 For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee.* It is a principle that carries into the NT. *Rom 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

Why is it then that Christians live in debt to the world's systems of banking? They become servants to the lender, *Pro 22:7 The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.* There are two solutions. Either save up for what you want or take a loan from a believer. The trouble is that we are greedy and want the future now. We do not have the patience to wait and earn what we want. This too is covetousness.

If you lend to your brother, it was to be interest free. *Deu 23:19 Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury: Deu 23:20 **Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury;** but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.* Interest or usury (נִשְׁכָּ = nîshak) comes from a root word meaning to sting. I suppose we might say that you were not to have a sting in your tail when you lent to your brother.

Interest teaches people respect for labour and a pledge guards against ideas of theft. Both if practiced in a Christian fashion teach respect for labour and property. It is oppression that is condemned.

One of the reasons that the Annual Percentage Rate (APR) is so high on debt cards. It is because many people who use these cards do not pay off their debts and so the other debtors are burdened with their debts too. I have no pity for this foolishness. People live in debt as a way of life but it is not the way the Christian should live because he should learn contentment.

People do not become money lenders because they are philanthropists. It is a business. The worst of this breed have earned the name “loan sharks”. I read of a man who took out a £20 loan from a loan shark and it rapidly spiralled into a £7000 repayment. The man was driven to the brink of suicide. The World Bank or “Banksters” as I like to call them and the International Monetary Fund are not philanthropists. They are a business lending money.

At the same time, the poorest countries of the world owe more money to these two institutions than they do any other private or government institutions because most of these loans were so poorly designed that the borrowing countries have not reaped enough income to pay them back. In other cases, government officials and private contractors have siphoned off the funds into private bank accounts. This international debt problem has become such a crisis that many poor countries pay more money to the World Bank and the IMF each year than they receive in loans. The World Bank's own figures indicate that the IMF extracted a net US\$1 billion from Africa in 1997 and 1998 more than they loaned to the continent.

More recently (2014) up to 30 low-income sub-Saharan African countries had their debts reduced under the IMF and World Bank's Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative, which was later supplemented by the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI). An estimated \$100 billion of debt was wiped out, easing countries' onerous debt burdens, **often the result of loans taken on by corrupt regimes**. These had meant more being spent on debt service payments than on health and education combined.

The European Union is equally culpable when it comes to putting people in debt. It is slightly more subtle. The EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) that subsidizes European farmers and is notable because of the harm it causes to producers in the developing world. It has created a European cartel that supports its own farmers and disadvantages others by removing free trade.

I am not saying that charging interest is wrong, what is wrong is encouraging a person to become indebted to the extent that they are worse off. This is filthy lucre.

When a loan was agreed between Israelites, a system of pledge was used. *Deu 24:6 No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge: for he taketh a man's life to pledge.* A pledge (חבל = châbal meaning to bind), is an arrangement whereby a borrower or debtor, provides collateral against the debt. It is like the “pawn shops”, where you left something of value in exchange for a

monetary loan. You were not allowed to take his means of producing bread, the upper millstone, to pledge.

You also had to respect a poor person and not be cruel to him. If he used his coat as a pledge, you had to return it so that he would not be cold at night. *Deu 24:12 And if the man be poor, thou shalt not sleep with his pledge: Deu 24:13 In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again when the sun goeth down, that he may sleep in his own raiment, and bless thee: and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the LORD thy God.*

This case law has an association with slavery and oppression. Putting people into a debt spiral that brings them into more misery is not godly. As Christians we should be just in all our dealings, considerate of others and very supportive of our Christian brothers. *Deu 23:19 **Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury:***

When Jesus came to Zacchaeus house, he became a changed man. *Luk 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. Luk 19:9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.* Zacchaeus publically admitted guilt, publically condemned himself and he offered restitution. Zacchaeus was a true son of Abraham, a generous man who restored to any he may have acted falsely with. Now that is a good example.

I know a man, who many years ago, as a boy, was generously given credit to buy a tyre for his bicycle. The boy promised faithfully that he would send the money through the post but the boy was a thief and a liar. Many years latter, as a man and as a Christian, he passed through the village and the shop was still there. Conscience reawakened, he stopped and paid the debt with interest to the surprise of the owner. Other people Innocent parties should not be made to pay for others dishonesty.

The smallest gains on earth, especially illgotten are anchors to keep the soul from heaven. No wonder Isaac Watts counted the richest gains, but loss! (When I survey the wondrous cross). The end, focusing on the cross, God's objective, blinkered him to all else. He had found true wealth.

### Corban

This was a tradition developed by the Pharisees. *Mar 7:11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.* They had developed a way of getting out of honouring their parent by devoting something to God rather than their parents. They declared the item corban or gift and it was a religious way to condone covetousness.

Jesus was condemning the general practice of the Pharisees of bypassing God's laws and substituting them with their own traditions through corban. It is not far different from the actions of Ananias and Sapphira. *Act 5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, Act 5:2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. Act 5:3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the*



*Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Act 5:4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.* God loves a cheerful giver but He clearly hates an “Indian giver<sup>5</sup>” or a lying giver because He punished them severely.

A vow was not commanded (Leviticus 27), it was volitional and it was not a sin not to vow. It was a sin to vow and not pay. *Ecc 5:4 When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Ecc 5:5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.*

It was a Rabbinic error which encouraged dishonesty, hypocrisy, lying, fraud and devalued the significance of the vow! The best advice of the scripture is *Ecc 5:2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.* The Corban sin was encouraging false hope in yourself and deceiving yourself that you are actually serving God whilst lying. You are a God robber.

There is nothing more hypocritical than a person who makes a display of religious devotion yet in reality gives nothing at all. *Luk 20:46 Beware of the scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; Luk 20:47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.*

If you give because you want to be seen as generous, you are wasting your time, *Mat 6:1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise **ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.*** You have already had your reward.

## Covetousness and restitution

### Accidents

If a Christian damages anything, even accidentally, he should offer to replace or repair the item. We should not hide or cover up our mistakes because that is deceitful. I knew a man years ago whose car rolled backwards in a car park and struck another vehicle. It was a brand new car and it was left with a large dent in the door. No body saw it happen and it would have been easy to have left the scene without detection. But God saw what happened and the man left a note for the driver and the matter was settled by the insurance companies. It was strange that the Insurance company took offence at the man's admission of liability. They would have preferred that he had said nothing!

We should always offer restitution and encourage others to do the same. Restitution is a principle of the law. Yet what would happen if the 'injured' party had died? What would you do if you could not repay the man if he had died or could not be found? There was no excuse. *Num 5:6 Speak unto the children of Israel, When a man or woman shall commit any sin that men commit, to do a trespass*

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<sup>5</sup> Indian giver is an American expression to describe a person who gives a gift and later wants it back, or something equivalent in return. It is based on the experiences of early European settlers and pioneers when trading with Native Americans. It was custom among some groups of Native Americans that when a gift was given, something of equal value was given by the receiver of the gift. The custom of Native American gift giving was misinterpreted by early European settlers as shady business dealings.

*against the LORD, and that person be guilty; Num 5:7 Then they shall confess their sin which they have done: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principal thereof, and **add unto it the fifth part thereof**, and give it unto him against whom he hath trespassed. Num 5:8 But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the LORD, **even to the priest**; beside the ram of the atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him.*

The damages with interest were paid to the Priests. How would we respond today? My suggestion would be to make the payment to a Christian organisation and put the money to the work of the Gospel.

We should perhaps consider the term “accident”. A general definition is “an event that happens by chance or that is without apparent or deliberate cause”. Of course, there is no such thing as an accident from God’s perspective only from ours. What would happen if you “accidentally” crashed your car and killed someone, or destroyed your school because you “accidentally” left a cooker on and it killed someone? If the “accident” was not premeditated, it was manslaughter not murder and the law gave you a chance to escape the death penalty. *Deu 19:4 And this is the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live: Whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly, **whom he hated not in time past**; Deu 19:5 As when a man goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood, and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slippeth from the helve, and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die; he shall flee unto one of those cities, and live: Deu 19:6 Lest the avenger of the blood pursue the slayer, while his heart is hot, and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him; whereas he was not worthy of death, inasmuch as he hated him not in time past.*

In the OT the avenger of blood would be after you. What should happen in the NT? I think that vengeance in the OT is linked to that “hardness of heart” that Our Lord spoke of. That hardness should not be in the new heart of the Christian. We have no option but to let it go. If we cannot, we have discovered another form of covetousness in us. We covet vengeance and that is a sin. *Rom 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Rom 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.*

Health and safety was encouraged in Israel. *Deu 22:8 When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that **thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence**.* This is part of loving your neighbour and taking every care to protect his life. This covers your home, your workplace, your transport, whatever you are involved in. That would mean checking the axe before you started to use it, so:

1. Respect others wealth and property
2. Learn to respect your own.

A person who takes risks and does not care for his own life will have no care for yours.

Fraud

We Christians are to be honest about our faults and that extends to accidental damage. If we are dishonest we are frauds. We may try to cover our mistakes because we covet a good reputation. That covetousness is fraud.

I remember a story from the life of the missionary John Gibson Patton who was a missionary to the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) where the indigenous people were cannibals. They were also fraudsters and highly skilled in stealing and they were thieves because they were covetous:

The natives were adept at stealing, and many articles belonging to Mr. Paton disappeared mysteriously. If he happened to drop a small article, such as a knife or a pair of scissors, a Tanna-man would place his foot over it, looking most innocent. Bending his toes to keep it underneath his foot he would walk away, leaving the missionary to wonder, upon missing the article, what could possibly have become of it? Sometimes an article would be hidden among the plaits of hair, or underneath the arm. Sometimes it would be carried away openly, no effort being made to conceal the theft.

Once Mr. Paton had his bedclothes hung out to dry, after a long rain. He was watching, as were the wives of two Aneityum helpers, for he suspected that the natives would look with covetous eye on the bedding so displayed.

Suddenly a chief, Miaki, ran to him crying, "Missi, come in quick, quick! I want to tell you something and to get your advice." Mr. Paton followed him into the house, but Miaki had hardly begun his story when the two women cried, "Missi, Missi, come quick! Miaki's men are stealing your sheets and blankets!"

But by the time he could get outside the house the men were gone, and the sheets and blankets too. Mr. Paton charged Miaki with having deceived him, calling him into the house just to give his men a chance to steal the bedclothes. Miaki looked somewhat ashamed, but only for a moment. Then he pretended to be terribly angry at the men, and struck furiously at the bushes with his huge club, saying, "Thus will I smash these fellows, and compel them to return your clothes."

We may find some humour in these tales but we should see that many of the things that these natives did is not dissimilar to how we steal time from employers and make inflated claims on expenses.

### Ignorance

In the days of Charles Dickens (mid-1800's) education for the masses was in its infancy. Ragged Schools were free schools, run through charity, in which the poorest children received religious instruction and a rudimentary education. Dickens generally applauded the work of these schools although he disapproved of introducing religious doctrine at the expense of a practical education which would help the pupil become a self-sufficient member of society. Despite the availability of these schools, most poor children remained uneducated due to the demand for child labour and the apathy of parents, wretchedly poor and uneducated themselves.

Dickens introduces these children in the novel 'A Christmas Carol' through the allegorical twins, 'Ignorance' and 'Want'. The Ghost of Christmas Present shows them, wretched and almost animal in appearance, to Scrooge with the warning: "This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want. Beware them both, and all of their degree, but most of all beware this boy, for on his brow I see that written which is Doom, unless the writing be erased."

We live in the information age where ignorance is no longer an excuse because there are answers to almost everything. Yet in spite of all this information I have seen in my years the rise of ignorance among Christians. Biblical and doctrinal literacy has been replaced by a culture that sings its way along the road of life. I wonder whether ignorance is due to disobedience.

I will close this command on a positive thought. We are given an occasion to covet and it is for God's gifts. *1Co 12:28 And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. 1Co 12:29 Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? 1Co 12:30 Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? 1Co 12:31 **But covet earnestly the best gifts:***

If we coveted the gifts more than we covet this life we might see ignorance removed from our brows.

## The 9<sup>th</sup> COMMAND

*Exo 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not reply to your neighbour with a lie.*

*Exo 20:16 You shall not testify a witness of falsehood against your neighbor.LITV.*

### What is Truth?

In Greek mythology, Lethe is one of the several rivers of Hades. Drinking from the river Lethe ("forgetfulness" or "oblivion") caused complete forgetfulness. Some ancient Greeks believed that souls were made to drink from the river before being reincarnated, so they would not remember their past lives. In Classical Greek, Lethe literally means "forgetfulness" or "concealment. The NT Greek word for truth (ἀλήθεια = alētheia) means "un-forgetfulness" or "un-concealment".

The 9<sup>th</sup> command is about truthfulness and the sin of misrepresentation through the presentation of false information. The verse puts a man under the obligation to tell his neighbour the truth and be truthful about his neighbour. It does not put us under the obligation to divulge all his knowledge on a subject and prudence suggests that we must be discreet in our use of information. However when we use information, in conversation and conduct, we must be scrupulously honest, not hiding or lying to the disadvantage of our neighbour or maligning him. Not just conscious lying but any, (even ignorant) misrepresentation.

So then the command is a reference to truth and conveying the truth. Covetousness was our attitude to property. False witness is an attitude to truth. *Exo 23:1 Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Exo 23:7 Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked.*

This principle is not exclusive to the OT but is a distinguishing trait of the Christian character. The saint is warned not to be involved in perpetrating a lie, or coming into contact with it. As Paul says *Eph 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.* But as with all of God's wise laws they expose the heart to the scrutiny of the Holy God. God damns a man for the conspiracy of his heart, for just thinking about it. The abode of the liar is outside of God's kingdom, *Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Rev 22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

The lie has as its father or originator, satan, *Joh 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for **he is a liar, and the father of it.*** All men by nature are servants of the devil. (Eph 2) and thus born liars. Anyone who refuses to submit to Christ has turned from the truth personified and that person becomes a liar because he hates the truth.

The only hope for a man to fully comply with this command is to change his parent and by adopted by God, he will testify *Rom 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the*

*children of God.* The spirit of God is called the spirit of truth, *Joh 14:17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* The world cannot receive him.

What is the basic intent of the lie, the false witness? In the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Genesis in simple language the origin of human sorrow is told, so simply put that the point is often lost. The devil beguiled man and man was most willingly disobedient. The punishment was just.

What really constituted the crime? Whether looked at from Adam's own personal disobedience or satan's beguiling of Eve, the subject of rebellion was to undermine the truth of God. The devil was attacking the truthfulness or veracity of God. The implication was that God was afraid of man becoming like Himself and had told man a lie to stop man from achieving his destiny. To become Divine. If God's integrity fails, what frame of reference do we have?

Adam did not assent to the truth in practice, he refused to be subject to God's precept and broke away from obedience. A man's faithfulness, his obedience, can only be measured by his "attitude" to truth, and adherence to it. If you love ME you will keep my commandments *Joh 8:45 And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.* Compliance with the truth is working harmoniously with the laws of God's righteousness.

Lying is a sign of reprobation *2Th 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:* and was the state of the nation that was to go into captivity. *Jer 7:8 Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit.*

Truth is essential for all communication if communication is to make sense and truth requires accuracy. Basically it has two forms.

1. Empirical truth namely that which is arrived at by experiment. It defines an event as likely to be true between certain limits and as such it defines laws. Newton did not discover gravity but he did propound certain laws, approximations that generally held true. Apples always fall down!
2. Absolute truth. These are matters revealed by God as certainties that have a real existence, but not always capable of immediate proof. I.e. Doctrine of Hades, of Noah's ark, Jonah and the whale.

Richard Feyneman's comments on the accuracy of the scientific method in establishing new laws is worth noting. He says,

"There is always the possibility of proving any definite theory wrong; but notice that we can never prove it right. Suppose that you invent a good guess, calculate the consequences, and discover every time that the consequences you have calculated agree with experiment. The theory is then right? No, it is simply not proved wrong. In the future you could compute a wider range of consequences, there could be a wider range of experiments, and you might then discover that the thing is wrong.

That is why laws like Newton's laws for the motion of planets last such a long time. He guessed the law of gravitation, calculated all kinds of consequences for the system and so on, compared them with experiment - and it took several hundred years before the slight error of the motion of Mercury was observed. During all that time the theory had not been proved wrong, and could be taken temporarily to be right. But it could never be proved right, because tomorrow's experiment might succeed in proving wrong what you thought was right. We never are definitely right, we can only be sure we are wrong."

Absolute truth may have its limits, that is, it holds true for a certain time until we are able to refine information. We shall also see that in respect of the ceremonial laws that they hold true for a certain time until they too are further refined to reveal a higher truth. Truth in consequence has a number of forms, absolute, eternal, ultimate, relative, partial, and derived.

Absolute requires immutability (Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, today and forever). Truth absolute cannot be superseded (I am the way....) and eternal truth requires omnipotence. *Dan 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: **and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*** Truth in this 'stable' form is bound up with the Nature and Purpose of God and must have its origin in God.

This is one of the reasons the Christian is advised to love truth because he is in a manner of speaking loving God. *Php 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.* As such it is not a passive love or admiration, it is active, "think on these things" and it should be our occupation.

Truth is a law which should regulate our intellectual process. It directs or should direct our impulses, our appetites, our affections. Our desires are not virtuous until we are truthful but they will always be virtuous if we gratify according to truth.

Truth will lead us on to sincerity, faithfulness, punctuality, frankness, honesty and lead us to examine matters carefully. Truth is the guardian against prejudice. We should examine issues carefully (as the priest did with the plague) so as to be satisfied that we have all of the available information and carefully balance our own replies so as to not disturb other pillars of truth. Truthfulness will make a man stable and uncomplicated, stable because of a single mind, uncomplicated without a web of lies.

Truth will not cover lies. It is never an honest man, who knowing the truth allows an error to be perpetuated. He will not lie to win approval because that is enmity with God, thrusting aside the truth of God. The believer is a witness of God. A witness of His grace, salvation and glory and we should never apologise for the truth.

Some are concerned with losing faith, friends, afraid of becoming outcasts, being persecuted for righteousness. But righteousness is truth in action, establishing God's law in the Heart, in the intellect, in practice. Truth puts God's service first. Truth Sanctifies. *Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.* It leans and nourishes and thus it is to be highly prized.

### The moral consequence of lies

It should be of some consolation that the deceits of men can be overridden by the Sovereignty of God, for example, Joseph's wicked brothers were brought to justice. Because God overrides and conveys blessings does not justify the action of evil men.

The object of the deceit in the 10<sup>th</sup> Command is "thy neighbour". *Exo 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.* The neighbour here is regarded as having the right to truth (as he was seen to have the right of property). Who is your neighbour? This was an issue for the lawyer in Jesus day. *Luk 10:29 But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?* The lawyer knew the scope of the law, yet "wished to justify himself". Why? It may have been because he has some doubt as to who his neighbour is. But how could he have kept the law if he did not know this?

Perhaps like the tradition of "corban" where a Pharisaical excuse was generated to avoid honouring parents, the lawyer too was seeking an excuse to avoid his duties to his neighbour. Let us too be careful of our own motives of self justification lest we are deceived. It may be:

1. To find an excuse to continue in error.
2. Seeking opinions of men as opposed to God, as Asa sought the physicians when the cause was spiritual. *2Ch 16:12 And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians.*
3. Asking for an authority sufficient to justify our own mischievousness i.e. asking permission of someone who has no right to grant it. An excuse if we are caught.

The lawyer is confronting God and the law giver Himself. Christ is interpreting the moral law in practical terms. Christ is well aware of the prejudice of the Levites (the priests and Levites had similar status). *2Ch 29:34 But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the other priests had sanctified themselves: for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests.* The prejudice of Jews that Jesus confronts was a form of self righteousness. The Jews tried to justify themselves without evidence hence their prejudices. They formed opinions before evidence was examined (like racial and colour prejudices).

Perhaps the Lord uses the two upholders of the law, the priest and the Levite because they typify a system in order to show that familiarity with the letter of the law is not familiarity with the spirit of the law. To make the illustration even sharper, these men are contrasted with a Samaritan. *Joh 4:9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.* The Samaritans were a mixed multitude left behind in Israel at the time of the first captivity *2Ki 17:24 And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from*



*Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof.*

In the story Jesus tells, both the Priest and Levite examine the wounded traveller and they have evidence of the man's injury. Scriptures afford us no evidence of who the man was so we might see in him 'everyman'. Yet here I must urge caution. Israel's neighbours were the people of Israel themselves. They were the brothers not the strangers who were the nations around about them, because those people were excluded and were to be exterminated. *Lev 19:17 Thou shalt not hate **thy brother** in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke **thy neighbour**, and not suffer sin upon him.* Neighbours and brothers were the covenant people.

When Jesus makes an observation about His family He has the same idea, *Mat 12:48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? Mat 12:49 And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.* You cannot call any person who is disobedient to God, your brother.

My point is, that if the Levite and the Priest had passed by, for example, a Samaritan or a Roman, they would probably have been applauded. If the person who assisted the wounded man had been a Jew, then it would have probably just reflected another of our prejudices that "all religious leaders are hypocrites". So I think that the story is poignant because the wounded man would have been a Jew and his brothers (priest and Levite) did not help him and a complete stranger, an alien to the commonwealth of Israel does.

The sight of this man did not convict them of any duty. They could not see farther than their noses. They could not see the breadth of the command, for example, *1Co 9:9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? 1Co 9:10 Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.* Are not men more important than oxen? The life more important than the raiment. One thing is certain the spirit was not present in these men.

The Samaritan was "moved with compassion" before he got to him. He was tender hearted, not petrified. He did by Nature the works of the law and was an even greater condemnation upon the sons of Jacob. He illustrated that the 'neighbour' was both compassionate and merciful and by so doing, the law of loving your neighbour was illustrated by a person outside of the Jewish faith. Perhaps again, the attitude of the Levite and priest illustrated the hardness of heart in the OT and is a lesson to us in the New Testament.

So what has this got to do with truth? It shows us that our prejudices and ignorance can totally mislead us. The truth becomes lost to us, hidden by our obduracy. We can fail in our duties and fall into sin. That however is not all. The reason that we behave in the ways that we do as humans, our mores, our beliefs all govern our actions. The question then becomes, as Pilate wryly observed, "What is truth?" *Joh 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should*

*bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Joh 18:38 Pilate saith unto him, **What is truth?** And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.*

With so many “beliefs” in the world, are they all right or close to being right, or is there only one great truth? How can we tell? My own experience is that Christianity, the truth founded in scripture and the way given by Christ is the right way. *Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, **the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*** Why do I say this? It is because I have discovered empirically, by proof, that what is said in God’s word actually happens. It happened to me. When I fell at Christ’s feet, when He graciously forgave me, he opened my eyes to His word and that closed book in an instant was opened to my mind. I can say with that man, I once was blind but now I see. The forgiveness of sin became a reality, an experience and a conviction that has grown stronger ever since.

Let me give you two reasons why Christianity raises high above these imitation religions and is why Christianity is unique.

1. The world’s great religious leaders and philosophers held all sorts of views about what happens in the afterlife, when you die. Religious leaders gave their followers ideas about what might happen but they were guessers. It was not the Creator that gave them their ideas. All of these died in due course and stayed very dead. **Only one came back from the grave to tell us what was on the other side of life and that was the Lord Jesus Christ.** The others, well I will leave you to guess where they wound up.
2. There is this great statement in the OT in Jeremiah. *Jer 32:17 Ah Lord GOD (Jehovah)! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:* Jehovah Saved, for so the name Jesus means, is that very Creator, *Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* **No other religious leader has dared to make that incredible assertion.** I have never seen any other religious leader make that claim. Our Saviour is the Creator.

Believe it or believe it not, you and I will arrive at a day when we will have to confront those realities. More than that the alternatives have some horrific consequences. Darwin’s great guess as to how life on earth started ranks with the tales of the brothers Grimm. It does not pass the criteria suggested by Feyneman (mentioned above):

"In general, we look for a new law by the following process. First, we guess it (audience laughter), no, don’t laugh, that’s really true. Then we compute the consequences of the guess, to see what, if this is right, if this law we guess is right, to see what it would imply and then we compare the computation results to nature, or we say compare to experiment or experience, compare it directly with observations to see if it works.

If it disagrees with experiment, it’s wrong. In that simple statement is the key to science. It doesn’t make any difference how beautiful your guess is, it doesn’t matter how smart

you are who made the guess, or what his name is... If it disagrees with experiment, it's wrong. That's all there is to it."

Darwin's ideas are not a theory or even a hypothesis. There is no evidence to show that atoms organise themselves into information that is capable of creating self-replicating machines. The excuse that given enough time this is possible has no foundation since there is no proof that the first step even occurred. Blind chance is not a mechanism either, it has no power to force events that occur, it merely describes the probability that it could happen. If you cannot show that it has happened the probability remains at zero.

Yet Darwin's guess has not been without its effect in the sphere of morality. The idea of the "survival of the fittest" and the concept of "favoured races" were espoused by Marx and the dictators of the twentieth century. Hitler's genocide of the Jewish people derived its warped belief from Darwin. So it is clear that bad science, lacking truth can lead to behaviour that is destructive of human relations. There are moral consequences to lies.

The story of the good Samaritan suggested that compassion was lacking among the Jewish people and to illustrate it through the life of an outsider is a great rebuke. The Samaritan was the neighbour to the Jew. It would further imply that if an outsider could show care to a fellow human being, the boundaries of neighbourliness have been extended. Whereas the neighbours were almost exclusively Israelites in the OT, outsiders could become proselytes. Outsiders were considered heathen, *Rev 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. Rev 22:15 For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*

The reason that the people of God had to maintain their strict identity was because the outside nations would work to corrupt them. *Deu 7:2 And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Deu 7:3 Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. Deu 7:4 For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly.*

We Christians often forget this important truth, that we are different from the world. There are only two classes of people in this world. Believers and unbelievers, Christians and sinners, the living in Christ and the dead in trespasses. *Eph 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. Eph 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Eph 2:5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)*

Those outside of Christ will to varying degrees work against the Gospel because the devil causes them to walk in his ways. That means they will be enemies of the cross. *Rom 8:6 For to be carnally*

*mind is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Rom 8:7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Rom 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Your enemies are far more numerous than you think. None the less, we are to extend kindness to them because they are fallen creatures made in God's image.*

*Mat 5:43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. Mat 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; Mat 5:45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. In the context of the OT the neighbour was a fellow Israelite<sup>6</sup>.*

That does not mean that we start to set up social welfare programs and institutions for unbelievers. We are probably doing far too much of that through our taxation and the welfare State. We must however strike a biblical balance. We must recognise that our first, our primary care, is for the people of Jesus, for God's people, *Gal 6:10 Whenever we have the opportunity, we have to do what is good for everyone, especially for the family of believers.* GW. If we have an opportunity to show the love of Christ to these people not in our family, in their distress, we should use the opportunity.

As Christians, we should stop using the word of God to find reason not to help or get involved with people who have genuine needs. That said we must never forget the vast chasm that lies between us and the unbeliever. How ever nice or 'good' the unbelievers are, they are different to you and unless they come to Christ that gulf will remain in eternity.

#### Where does truth live?

Paul describes the "work of the law" *Rom 2:13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. Rom 2:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Rom 2:15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)*

The work of the law is what the law does, its deeds, its works, the practical effects of the law, or the outworking of the law. To this we must add that the law itself was not written in any hearts in the OT. *Jer 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days,*

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<sup>6</sup> Neighbourly duties are clearly confined to the Israelites and between the Israelites. Lev 19:11 "Never steal, lie, or deceive your neighbour. Lev 19:12 "Never swear by my name in order to deceive anyone. This dishonours the name of your God. I am the LORD. Lev 19:13 "Never oppress or rob your neighbour. Never keep the pay you owe a hired worker overnight. Lev 19:14 Never curse deaf people or put anything in the way of blind people to make them stumble. Instead, fear your God. I am the LORD. Lev 19:15 "Don't be corrupt when administering justice. Never give special favours to poor people, and never show preference to important people. Judge your neighbour fairly. Lev 19:16 Never gossip. Never endanger your neighbour's life. I am the LORD. Lev 19:17 "**Never hate another Israelite. Be sure to correct your neighbour so that you will not be guilty of sinning along with him.** Lev 19:18 Never get revenge. Never hold a grudge against any of your people. Instead, love your neighbour as you love yourself. I am the LORD. GW. The application of these duties of the law make for peace within the Nation.

*saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and **write it in their hearts**; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.* The law would eventually be written on fleshly tables by the Spirit of God, *Heb 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:*

The people that Paul describes are not Jews but Gentiles who are behaving like Jews should behave. They are acting in a right way, doing the right things but because God has not covenanted the Law with them they are a law unto themselves. Not that anyone could gain God's favour through their own works. *Gal 2:16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, **but by the faith of Jesus Christ**, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: **for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified**.* We are justified by faith in Christ alone.

Under the first Covenant, the law was externalised under the second Covenant the law is internalised as a principle of the new life in Christ. It is written in the heart suggesting the source of our motivation and actions is changed, *Pro 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.* Our heart determines what we are and how we behave. I do not see that the law is written at one stroke upon the heart but that it is part of the process of sanctification. If it were written instantly, it would be difficult to explain why so many Christians behave so badly.

The process of change or transformation includes our mental processes as well. *Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind**, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

### The conscience

I cannot explain the metaphysics but somehow, the heart and the mind produce a faculty called the conscience. In the OT the heart appears to function as the conscience, *2Sa 24:10 And **David's heart smote him** after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, **I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.*** Perhaps the heart and the conscience (as it is called in the NT) are intertwined? The conscience checks parity between the law and our actions. It somehow bears witness to the truth by giving us the feeling of sinfulness and guilt. If we do something wrong, the conflict registers in our conscience and hopefully will change the direction of our actions. The conscience works on the heart, (so perhaps when David's heart smote him, it was expressing the action of the conscience? Another example is with respect to the woman taken in adultery. *Joh 8:9 And they which heard it, being **convicted by their own conscience**, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.*

There are however a number of things that we need to observe in regard to the conscience and perhaps the most important is that it is not infallible because it can be evil. *Heb 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an **evil conscience**, and our bodies washed with pure water.* Why would this be? I will suggest that as a faculty, the conscience has inertia. It is capable of keeping us on a path. It gets its inertia from exercise. *Act 24:16*

*And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.*

How do we exercise the conscience? I will suggest that it is through the application of God's word to every aspect of our lives. We might ask, "What does God say that I should do in this circumstance?" "How should I behave so that I do not offend my God?" and that would be exercise. In a general sense it is the application of the laws of Christ in our lives. It is being in-lawed to Christ. It is specifically the acquisition and storage of **God's truth** in our hearts and lives. Of course, that 'conscience' extends to our fellow humans, 'toward men' also. *2Co 4:2 But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*

My suggestion is that the conscience can be redirected and strengthened. It may start off weak, *1Co 8:7 Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with **conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.*** It may be defiled, *Tit 1:15 Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and **conscience is defiled.*** It may be burned out, *1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their **conscience seared** with a hot iron.* But above all it can be made good, *Act 23:1 And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, I have lived in all **good conscience** before God until this day.*

I think that it must be possible for the conscience to be fed falsehood and lies and the consequence of that will be that it will not function normally. That is why some people seem to be able to sin at will and have no conscience about their sin. Their conscience does not work properly. It may also pick up truth as well as falsehood along the way. The Gentiles picked up on the truth of the law and built it into parts of their lives. *Rom 2:15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, **their conscience also bearing witness**, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another).*

A good conscience will act as a check on our behaviour and warn us of danger if we are verging on sin. A conscience that is not exercised is useless. I think that Our Lord sparks the first exercise of conscience, because that awakens us to sin. In the OT, that guilt could not be removed. *Heb 10:1 For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. Heb 10:2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged **should have had no more conscience of sins.** Heb 10:3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. Heb 10:4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.*

It was only Christ who could purge the conscience. *Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* The lesson of conscience is that God wants us to be truthful, honest, on the inside and not just on the outside, *Psa 51:6 Behold, thou **desirest truth in the inward parts**: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.*

## Truth and holiness

It is with this concept of the consistency of truth that we look to that supreme attribute of God, Holiness. *Lev 11:45 For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, **for I am holy**.* It is also a communicable attribute of God. *Eph 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy** and without blame before him in love:* This shows the concept of holiness was decreed before the act of sin in the creation. Holiness can be defined apart from sin.

God declares His holiness, *Psa 89:35 Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David.* Holiness is the surety against error. It is the consistency of God in His knowledge and dealings, the ability to decree without contradiction within the whole compass of His works. By being consistent there is no room for error and so God must always by definition be separate from sin. He continually acts according to truth. He changes not!

Holiness in us is a consequence of sanctification. *2Co 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.* The outworking of truth (sanctification) perfects holiness in us, we are clean through the word. *Joh 15:3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you* The word is truth and sanctifies us. *Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. Our hearts are changed by this truth.* *Act 15:9 And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.*

The way that Christ's blood works in our lives is similar to the way truth works. *Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?* How does the blood of Christ do this? Blood is associated with the life of the creature. *Gen 9:4 But flesh with **the life thereof, which is the blood** thereof, shall ye not eat.* In Christ we find, the way, the truth and the life. *Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*

My suggestion is that the "blood of Christ" represents all that the life of Christ is. The literal blood of Christ has soaked into the ground at Golgotha but what we have is the merit of that dying work symbolised by the blood. The "blood of Christ" represents all that Christ is and all that Christ did for us. In a manner of speaking, we have in sanctification, a blood transfer. The blood works in our lives, the merit works, to bring truth in the inward parts, cleansing and sanctifying us from our sin, producing holiness.

We move from dead works to service as the faith of God persuades our hearts of our duty and as it outworks to conform us to Christ, we are made holy. So as faithfulness was the adherence to/conformity to truth, holiness is the product of truth outworked. It is not just a cleaning, but a conforming within us to the moral law. The 9<sup>th</sup> command is instructive in Holiness. Truth produces holiness, holiness does not produce truth.

## Boundaries of Truth

It was Mark Twain who famously observed, “If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything.” We might also suggest that there are times when you might give too much truth. Our neighbour does not always have the right to know everything. Some people cannot be trusted with information of a confidential nature. They are not compassionate neighbours, interested in a persons welfare and they use information in a careless manner, that can cause hurt. One group of people who fail to exercise care in using truth are “tale bearers”. Another group would be those who would use information to our disadvantage.

It is strange to imagine a world without sin where we would need signatures, door locks or police and in which honesty would prevail. A world in which everyone was truthful and honest. There is a well known story about George Washington’s honesty.

In the original story, when Washington was six years old he received a hatchet as a gift and damaged his father’s cherry tree. When his father discovered what he had done, he became angry and confronted him. Young George bravely said, “I cannot tell a lie...I did cut it with my hatchet.” Washington’s father embraced him and rejoiced that his son’s honesty was worth more than a thousand trees.

As ministers concerned with moral and religious reform, McGuffey and Weems had similar motives for writing. Both men also believed that the best way to improve the moral fibre of society was to educate children. Washington provided the perfect role model, and McGuffey turned the cherry tree myth into a story specifically aimed at children. Follow-up questions at the end of McGuffey’s cherry tree story reinforce its message: “How did his father feel toward him when he made his confession? What may we expect by confessing our faults?”

Ironically, this iconic story about the value of honesty was invented by one of Washington’s first biographers, an itinerant minister and bookseller named Mason Locke Weems. After Washington’s death in 1799 people were anxious to learn about him, and Weems was ready to supply the demand. As he explained to a publisher in January 1800, “Washington you know is gone! Millions are gaping to read something about him...My plan! I give his history, sufficiently minute...I then go on to show that his unparalleled rise and elevation were due to his Great Virtues.” Weems’ biography, *The Life of Washington*, was first published in 1800 and was an instant bestseller. However the cherry tree myth did not appear until the book’s fifth edition was published in 1806.

How sad that a minister should create a lie in order to propagate the notion of truth and honesty. It is little different to “Christian” parents who propagate the lies associated with Santa Claus, the tooth fairy and Easter bunnies. Some will say that it is just a harmless bit of fun because we know that they are just myths but I do not see that is how Christ would have dealt with error.

Why are we discontent with the truth? It is a remnant of our first father. *Joh 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his*



*own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. Lying is part of that old nature, the old man that we must put off. Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph 4:25 Wherefore **putting away lying**, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.*

In handling any information we must examine the motive for propagating information and it will often guard us against the error of false witness and lies. One form of truth handling or should we say disguising the truth is to use camouflage. Camouflage was used in the first place by the creator in as He built it into creation giving some creatures the ability to protect themselves from enemies by a change of colour (fish, moths) or shape (stick insect). Camouflage was used to great effect in the second World War in the UK. 443 mock airfields were made to supplement the 434 real ones. The mock airfields drew the sting of the enemies and so afford protection to civilian parties. I do not here make any comment on war (reserved for the 6<sup>th</sup> command) but I pose the question, is disguise legitimate and in no contradiction of the 9<sup>th</sup> command.

I would answer, it must be seen in terms of motive. It is in some parts of the natural world, an act of Divine planning for the protection of His creatures. As protection it is legitimate. The failure of the predator to detect the disguised creature, who is in no way obliged to reveal their identity since it would be disadvantageous and result in their demise. The creature is manifesting itself in a particular way and what it shows is real but what it means is misinterpreted. Likewise if disguise would avoid perpetrating a crime on a person (i.e. the blindness of confusion by the Angels at Sodom), it has legitimacy.

I do not see that we have an obligation to tell anyone anything if they ask us information. We may speak out of politeness or decline. The question is, "if you do give information, what are you obliged to give?" Again, we must look at motivation. Where we hide the truth for reasons of deceit and greed, to deceive the innocent (Jacob and Esau) the motive declares the act unwholesome. Jacob assumed a false identity to steal his brother's birthright.

Suppose instead of physical camouflage we used verbal camouflage? Was Rahab justified in telling a lie? *Jos 2:3 And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab, saying, Bring forth the men that are come to thee, which are entered into thine house: for they be come to search out all the country. Jos 2:4 And the woman took the two men, and hid them, and said thus, There came men unto me, but I wist not whence they were: Jos 2:5 And it came to pass about the time of shutting of the gate, when it was dark, that the men went out: whither the men went I wot not: pursue after them quickly; for ye shall overtake them. Jos 2:6 But she had brought them up to the roof of the house, and hid them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order upon the roof.*

Were God's enemies, the inhabitants of the land, entitled to know God's plans? I remind you again that the commandment is in the OT specifically to the Covenant nation. *Exo 20:16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.* Does it therefore apply outside of the nations, to the Canaanites, the enemies of God? The answer must be no. When men reject the word of Truth, the Word of God, they forfeit the right to truth. They do not want the truth, they just want words that will please them. That is just what God gives to wicked king Ahab.

When Ahab and Jehoshaphat enquire of the Lord about going into battle, the Lord encourages him with a lie. *1Ki 22:22 And the LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. 1Ki 22:23 Now therefore, behold, the LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.* Ahab dies in a battle whose outcome God had already decided.

God decreed that a lying spirit should deceive Ahab but had He told Rahab to lie?

This is not merely an OT phenomenon. *2Th 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 2Th 2:12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* Unbelievers have no right to the truth and if they reject the truth of Christ, they are justly damned. *Joh 12:39 Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, Joh 12:40 He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.*

Rahab's lie is in possibly the lie of exigency. This is telling a lie to prevent damage to a person or property. Yet it was a lie. If God will withhold the truth do we have the same right to do the same if He has not told us to do so? Rahab was not rewarded for her lie but for delivering the spies, *Jas 2:25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?* In her book "The Hiding Place", Corrie Ten Boom writes about her sister Nollie, who hid two Jews (Katrien and Annaliese) from the Nazi's. This takes place during World War II.

"Standing a few feet away, seemingly immobilized by some terrible emotion, was old Katrien from Nollie's house!" "I bolted down the stairs, threw open the door, and pulled her inside. "Katrien! What are you doing here? Why were you just standing there?"

"She's gone mad!" She sobbed. "You're sister's gone mad!" "Nollie? Oh, what happened!" "They came!", she said, "The S.D. (Sicherheitsdienst) I don't know what they knew or who told them. Your sister and Annaliese were in the living room and I heard her!" The sobs broke out again. "I heard her!" "Heard what?" I nearly screamed.

"Heard what she told them! They pointed at Annaliese and said, 'Is this a Jew?' And your sister said, 'Yes.'"

I felt my knees go weak. Annaliese, blond, beautiful young Annaliese with the perfect papers. And she'd trusted us! Oh Nollie, Nollie, what has your rigid honesty done! "And then?" I asked. "I don't know. I ran out the back door. She's gone mad!"

Nollie, we soon learned, had been taken to the police station around the corner, to one of the cells in back. But Annaliese had been sent to the old Jewish theatre in Amsterdam from which Jews were transported to extermination camps in Germany and Poland.

It was Mietje who kept us in touch with Nollie. She was in wonderful spirits, Mietje said, singing hymns and songs in her high sweet soprano. How could she sing when she had betrayed another human being! Mietje relayed another message from Nollie, one especially for me: "No ill will happen to Annaliese. God will not let them take her to Germany. He will not let her suffer because I obeyed Him."

Six days after Nollie's arrest, the telephone rang. Pickwick's voice was on the other end. "The Jewish theatre in Amsterdam was broken into last night. Forty Jews were rescued. One of them, a young woman, was most insistent that Nollie know: 'Annaliese is free.' Do you understand this message?"

I nodded, too overcome with relief and joy to speak. How had Nollie known? How had she been so sure?

There are other possible replies that Nollie could have given the Nazi's. She could have even said nothing! But the point is that she did what she believed was God's Will, and put her faith in Him to deliver her, if it was His Will. She did not knowingly choose to do that which the Word of God clearly says is wrong to do; lie.

Elijah deceived the Syrians for the good of Israel and Divine aid assists his noble plan. The end is a blessing to the Nation. *2Ki 6:17 And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. 2Ki 6:18 And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.* This was instigated by the Lord not Elijah.

This leads us to consider "stratagem". This is the use of movements that are intended to give an advantage over the enemy by playing on the enemies lack of information. It is a case of hoping the enemy interprets your action in a particular fashion, but to their disadvantage. Joshua uses that stratagem with the Lords help, *Jos 8:5 And I, and all the people that are with me, will approach unto the city: and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first, that we will flee before them, Jos 8:6 (For they will come out after us) till we have drawn them from the city; for they will say, They flee before us, as at the first: therefore we will flee before them. Jos 8:7 Then ye shall rise up from the ambush, and seize upon the city: for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. Jos 8:8 And it shall be, when ye have taken the city, that ye shall set the city on fire: according to the commandment of the LORD shall ye do. See, I have commanded you.*

Joshua makes an ambush behind the city, lures the people out with a false retreat and lures them into the trap which Jehovah springs. Did Joshua have any obligation to tell them of his plans? Did Joshua act falsely when he retreated? No, it is hard to fault him, particularly when he is doing God's bidding. There is here a difference to be considered with this war and others, it is an extermination in judgement. *Jos 11:20 For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that he might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour, but that he might destroy them, as the LORD commanded Moses.* The inhabitants of Canaan had already forfeited the right to live in God's eyes – they were judged.

That we are liable to deception is a mark of our first nature as ‘cheaters’. It is only in harmony with the Deity, the absolute source of knowledge, that we can be secure from deception. Joshua was deceived by the Gideonites. *Jos 9:3 And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, Jos 9:4 They did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; Jos 9:5 And old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. Jos 9:6 And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us.*

Joshua, because he took their word and appearance at face value allowed some of the enemy to gain sanctuary in Israel. *Jos 9:15 And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation sware unto them.* They acted in their own strength to make an oath which could not be broken (a covenant) and they did not consult the Lord. He was the Captain, Joshua was the head in the earthly sense, It is a lesson to beware of rash and hasty decisions. Weigh evidence carefully.

However, does it mean that a man acting on information that is incorrect is guilty of an offence even if he acts in a moral fashion? Is it a sin to act on misinformation? *Act 3:17 And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. Act 3:18 But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Act 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;* I do not see that ignorance in any way is an excuse because the deed itself will be weighed in the balance of God’s justice. *Act 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:*

If Christ were a false prophet, then the law said that He should die. The fact that many could not see this did not excuse them of committing a wicked act. Error always must lie in the person apprehending and acting on information. *Jas 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.* Thus God in presenting us situations is not responsible for our sin, but we are and it flows from the lust within.

Should we speak lies in any circumstance? I suggest no unless we are commanded to by God Himself.

### Forms of truth

Truth may be presented in a number of ways.

1. **Figures of Speech.** This is where the hills are said to skip like lambs. A land of milk and honey and hyperbole (emphasis by exaggeration) such as “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the seas”.

A look at Benjamin Keech’s tome on Types and Metaphores will show us that we may legitimately present a truth under other forms of speech without lying or deceiving. If the dispensationalist bore this in mind they would have less trouble in understanding the OT.

There is nothing in scripture to inhibit the form of presentation of truth as long as the symbolism is accurate and is a recognised figure of speech.

There are some however, Quakers, who would only speak the truth and they avoided forms and figures of speech as did the Mennonites.

2. **Interrogation by action.** This is a way that God presents us with a situation that is often unsavoury and makes demands of us to teach us what we are like. It is not dishonest to demand of us what we cannot do. The lesson is to seek God's strength. *Deu 10:16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.* Of course this is impossible but it leads us to the point where we ask God to fulfil the demand. *Deu 30:6 And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.*

The disciples are asked to produce food for a multitude. *Mar 6:37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?* The unfolding miracle was designed to reveal something to them. It was not just the power of Christ but the hardness of their own hearts, *Mar 6:52 For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.*

### Presenting the truth

There is a story told by Siegfried Sassoon, the Great War poet. When he was brought back to London after being wounded, his stretcher was taken off of the train at Charing Cross Station where, "a woman handed me a bunch of flowers and a leaflet by the Bishop of London who earnestly advised me to lead a clean life and attend Holy Communion." Although the Bishop of London's concern for the morals of young soldiers is touching, it hardly meets the needs of a wounded man wrestling with the morality of the killing fields of France.

Well meaning religious zealots may well hold the truth but when it comes to propagating it and whether the things that they propagate are relevant to the circumstances of the individual, is often not considered. In fact the truth may well have the opposite effect because the credibility of the messenger is brought into question (their motives) and that can damage the truth.

The man of God does not resort to human wisdom in the pursuit of truth, but to Divine wisdom. As Daniel sought the Lord for interpretation of Nebuchanezzar's vision, so we too seek the word of God and how it should be revealed in our generation. That requires that we become familiar with the truth as Timothy was exhorted to do. *2Ti 2:15 Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* As a workman, Timothy is not to waver in the truth. He must present it with nice clear sharp eyes and he has the Lord ever before him as the overseer of this work. It is his aim in all his dealings with truth to win God's approval.

The individuals love for truth will be in proportion to his love for Christ. A false witness (a liar) will always seek to hide from God, but the honest heart will always come to the light. *Joh 3:21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.* The man who is honest, truthful not in ideas but in practice, can only see his deeds in the light

of Christ and does so to make sure that they are originated in God, unlike the Pharisee. *“That his works may be manifested that they have been wrought in GOD”*. *“He did his works in obedience to God”* (GNMM). *“To make it plain that his actions have been divinely prompted”*. (Moffat). *“It may be clearly seen that God is in all he does”* (NEB).

The seeker after the truth seeks it to be approved of God. He desires to be honest before God and be a man beloved of God. He does not let men judge his honesty by their standards, he comes continually to God standard. He constantly calibrates himself to God’s word. Like a man who would check his watch every hour, he listens for the “voice of truth”, Jesus. *Joh 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*

Now the difficulty often comes in presenting the truth of God. Men by nature hate the things God has to say to them. *1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Even men under grace have flesh that cringes when it is touched by the truth and condemns them. Does this mean we must modify the truth to make it palatable? Sweeten it to make it acceptable, put sugar in the medicine?

I hear regularly of ministers who, when questioned about how they view people who advance an unbiblical idea, for example, “that God accepts homosexuality in the church”, say that they do not agree with it. Yet in the same breath they will tell you that they respect the person’s point of view. I understand respect to mean that they accept or value what the other person is saying. By this they are saying that although they have a different position to you, you are also right. So we have to welcome deviants as long lost brothers. That is a broad road to ecumenism where different beliefs get bundled together into a false orthodoxy.

Take a reality check. Jesus did not respect the deviant views of the Pharisees. Further, He did not have any nice words to describe them, neither did he beg to differ, agree to disagree or respect their views. *Mat 23:14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Mat 23:15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Mat 23:16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!*

We must let God take His consequences for His truth and recognise that we are merely the messengers. That means that we should also present the truth lovingly and wisely, not in frustration, anger, indifference. We must not show uncertainty in the truth we present or the way in which we present it. A man bearing a precious vessel walks carefully, methodically, patiently making sure the hands receive it before he lets it go.

He presents the truth in love *Eph 4:15 But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ,* or being truthful in love. The Lord’s approach to the person

who had large possessions is an example for us. This was not a hardened Pharisee. Christ corrects his understanding and gives him practical advice and most of all “Jesus LOVED him” *Mar 10:21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me.* That was where the man could not go at that time.

However that verse in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 15 speaks to the saints of God. It is this presentation of the truth with a sincere love for God’s children that aids growth. He does not present it as a mere duty, or to gain the praise of man, but to benefit the household of truth. Dr Martyn Lloyd Jones observed (Preacher and Preaching):

The trouble with some of us is that we love preaching, but we are not always careful to make sure that we love the people to whom we are actually preaching. If you lack this element of compassion for the people you will also lack the pathos which is a very vital element in all true preaching. Our Lord looked out upon the multitude and ‘saw them as sheep without a shepherd’, and was ‘filled with compassion’. And if you know nothing of this you should not be in a pulpit, for this is certain to come out in your preaching.”

That said there are many aspirants to the ministry who have no calling of God. True ministers are God’s gifts and they are rare in our day. *Eph 4:11 And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:*

Ministers handle the truth of God and we shall be held to account for our stewardship. There are negative and positive practical aspects to this ministry. *Eph 4:14 That we henceforth **be no more children, tossed to and fro**, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; Eph 4:15 **But speaking the truth in love**, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:*

Systematic error leaves deformed children, they are tossed about in a cradle of false teaching. That is why you see weak faithed believers, tiny tots in the faith, they have been fed on inconsistency and error. They cannot grow!! I heard someone describe these people as “candy floss” Christians. One bite and they are all gone..

Speaking the truth in love, is the desiring of souls to be benefited. It is further a cause for rejoicing. *1Co 13:6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.* A loving and thoughtful Christian will be a rejoicing Christian.

But I advise care because love must never override the truth of God. Paul has a nationalistic love for the earthly Israel. *Rom 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, Rom 9:2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. Rom 9:3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Rom 9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and*

*the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; The nation of Israel was his earthly heritage so it was natural that he loved them. They were family. Rom 10:1 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved Rom 10:2 For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

He shows compassion and desire that they should have the benefit of the Gospel. It is an attitude of heart. But after each statement you will notice (read the rest of chapter 9, 10 and 11) he argues from the revelation of God that justifies God's dealings with them. They are justly "cut off" to use the analogy of the Olive tree, though not all were. Paul's feelings do not colour his handling of the truth.

A man then who loves God will bring his own thoughts captive to Christ. He will conform his ideas to God's thoughts, like a friendly dog he will call emotion to heel and show his love to God by the adherence to the truth. The man who wanders from the truth, does not love God, for he has rejected the fundamental quality of God – "I am the way, the TRUTH and the life!"

### Truth and righteousness

Our Christian faith is about developing a right relationship to our Creator, becoming "right wise" or righteous before Him, in order that we might have a peaceful relationship with Him. *Rom 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Rom 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

It is truth puts us on the path to righteousness. The law was given by Moses, grace and truth by Jesus. *Joh 1:17 For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* Truth came through a person Jesus Christ, not through mere information or a set of abstract rules. The law could not make a person righteous, right with God. *Gal 2:21 I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.* It was the operation of God's grace and truth in Christ that gives us a hope of being right with God. This light of the gospel of grace shows our darkness, how far we are from the truth. *Joh 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* When this gospel takes root in our soul it produces fruit, spiritual fruit growing out of that light. One of the pods of that fruit contains truth and truth sown in the spirit will yield a truthful fruit.

### Truth and sin

Sin is defined as "missing the mark" of God's righteousness. *Rom 3:22 Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* The bondage to sin can only be broken by Christ. *Joh 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; Joh 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Joh 8:33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Joh 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. Joh 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. Joh 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* The truth will set you free. We were held in bondage to sin and are set free from this chain. Truth severs the bond as the sword of God's word.



There are many guessers and fakirs in the world, selling all manner of redemption. They all have ideas about the human condition and what can be done to improve the lot of man. Not one of them has any idea of what is true. They lie rotting and rotted in graves victims of ignorance and sinners all. Only someone who owned truth, someone who was truth personified, someone who transcended this rotten world and overcame death could possibly free man from sin. The sinner will die a sinner because he hates this truth *2Th 2:11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:*

### Truth and worship

Having entered into a saving relationship with Christ the possibility of true worship opens up. The question is not where we worship, as Jesus told the Samaritan women, it is how we worship. *Joh 4:23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.* It is not a question of our pleasure, or of us choosing a building to attend a weekly ritual in, or of how we decide to honour the Creator. That choice is made by Him and it is "in spirit and in truth". *Joh 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*

Worship (worth-ship) is our expression of how we value God and our relationship with Him. It leads to a mutual sharing or fellowship. That fellowship exists as long as we continue to walk in the truth, that is in the light of God's word. *1Jn 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.* It is the unifying factor of the saints. The unity of the spirit is the binding of men to the pillars of God's truth. It is founded on the doctrines of Christ and Christian union is never based on social common places, compromise, or error but only upon spiritual truth.

Is it possible that one man in a body of believers not walking in truth could corrupt the worship of the corporate assembly. It did in the OT, why not in the NT? Achan's trespass cost the nation dearly. *Jos 7:11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.*

Christ warns the churches to hold fast to the truth or suffer the consequences. *Rev 3:1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Rev 3:2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Rev 3:3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. Rev 3:4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.* (See in particular Thyatira).

We have referred earlier to the story of the Gibeonites, *Jos 9:3 The people of Gibeon had also heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai. Jos 9:4 So they decided that some of their men should pretend to be messengers to Israel from a faraway country. The men put worn-out bags on their donkeys and found some old wineskins that had cracked and had been sewn back together. The*

Gibeonites were Canaanites and so marked as the enemies of God but Joshua was tricked into promising them sanctuary in Israel. It was introducing poison into the nation. Religious poison.

How then can the church of Christ invite unbelievers into its sacred worship? How can it mingle untruth with truth? An unbeliever by definition cannot worship in spirit and in truth, *Rom 8:8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Rom 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but **in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.** Now if any man **have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.** Rom 8:10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.* It is sinful to even consider that an unbeliever can participate as an equal partner with believers.

The unbeliever cannot worship in spirit and in truth. This is the fallacy of inviting unbelievers to worship! Unbelievers in a meeting of God's people is the exception not the rule. *1Co 14:24 But suppose all of you are prophesying when those unbelievers and outsiders come in. They will realize that they are sinners, and they will want to change their ways because of what you are saying.* If they come in they nature of the worship should convict them of their sin but that is seldom seen, either.

You may ask, how are we to get to the unbelievers? How did they do it in Paul's day, Wesley's day, Whitfield's day? They went out and preached in public. They were men gifted by God to the church. They were evangelists, not money making entertainers, who took the Gospel out of, not in to the church.

Worship is a manifestation of the truth. It is the creature in his most perfect of acts of obedience to God (not just as a body, but as an individual). He should always seek to improve, learn more, to conform more to the image of Christ in order to improve worship.

#### Truth in practice

1. **Promise.** A promise is simply the "word" of the person making the promise. *1Ki 8:25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst (word) him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me.* The word of God is true because He can make His promises happen. *Rom 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; Rom 4:21 And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*
2. **Vow.** The vow is another form of promise, a solemn promise. If we are incapable of fulfilling a promise, we should not make it in the first place. *Ecc 5:5 Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.* It is perhaps not outright dishonesty that makes a person promise more than they can do. It may be over enthusiasm but that still turns the promise into a lie and it undermines the character of the individual. If that person claims to be a Christian, then it also reflects upon the character of God. It might be said of this, as it was to David, *2Sa 12:14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme.*

Language has a currency, a face value such that speech is a sufficient indication of intent. False promises are like forged currency, they have no value.

3. **Pledge.** The idea contained in the Hebrew is something that is weaved or bound. It is something that is tied up with a loan. It is collateral for a loan. *Gen 38:17 And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? Gen 38:18 And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.*

The pledge was a reminder of the promise given. The Holy Spirit is a pledge to the believer that God has something more for him. *Eph 1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* This translation is better, *Eph 1:13 In whom you also, after you had heard the word of truth (the gospel of your salvation), in whom also believing, you were signed with the holy Spirit of promise. Eph 1:14 Who is the pledge of our inheritance, unto the redemption of acquisition, unto the praise of his glory. In marriage an engagement ring. It is the same token of God's operation on our behalf in the hope of eternal possession. DRB.*

The idea of exchange and encouragement by giving a real, tangible token of our intent teaches us value. It is like the custom of giving an engagement ring as a promise that you would marry a person.

4. **Oath.** This is another form of reinforcing a promise and can be between man and man, or man and God. *Gen 26:28 And they said, We saw certainly that the LORD was with thee: and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; Deu 29:12 That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: an oath to obey God.*

An oath may invoke negative consequences if it is breached. *Num 5:21 Then the priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell;* An oath is stronger than verbal exchange (i.e. promise) eliciting an undertaking often with outward symbols, but not necessarily exchanges of pledges. It culminates in a covenant or solemn agreement that often involves calling God to bear witness.

### Human dishonesty

I recall seeing a film of the triumphant return of the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain at Heston Aerodrome (as they were called) after a meeting with the German Chancellor Adolf Hitler in Munich in 1938. They signed an agreement, "symbolic of the desire of our two people never to go to war again". According to Chamberlain's account, Hitler interjected "Ja! Ja!" ("Yes! Yes!") as the Prime Minister read the agreement. The two men signed the paper then and there. When, later that day, German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop remonstrated with Hitler for signing it, Hitler

replied, "Oh, don't take it so seriously. That piece of paper is of no further significance whatever." Chamberlain, on the other hand, when he returned to his hotel for lunch patted his breast pocket and said, "I've got it!"

Chamberlain was a good man a but naïve politician. The British Prime Minister was hailed for bringing "peace to Europe" after making a non-aggression pact with Germany, signed by Adolf Hitler which stated the German leader's desire never to go to war with Britain again. Mr Chamberlain declared the accord with the German's signalled "peace for our time", after he had read it to a jubilant crowd gathered at Heston. The German leader stated in the agreement: "We are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe."

It was just what the public wanted to hear because the previous war, only twenty years earlier and its devastating consequences, were still fresh in their minds. Yet Adolf Hitler did not keep to the promises he made to Neville Chamberlain in September 1938. A year later the German leader derided the agreement as just a "scrap of paper" and invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. Chamberlain died the next year, 1940.

It reminded me of the tyrant Temures, who promised the garrison of Sebastia that no blood would be shed if they surrendered to him. They surrendered and he shed no blood. Instead he buried them all alive. This is literalism and if possible it should be resisted in the interpretative process. But who was at fault. He kept his word (like Elisha) and used a stratagem. The garrison gauged his intent wrongly and perhaps they should have got more information, especially from an enemy. Is the promise according to the expectation we excite voluntarily in another? I.e. Is the promise binding on the man to whom it is given as he understands it? Is it based on my understanding or the promises intent? (Palley).

It must be the obligation of the one who promises *Gal 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.* The Jew took the seed to the physical descendents. God meant it to those in Christ so there was no fault in the promise.

Truth is a precious commodity and it needs protecting if a society is to have any stability. For Israel, truth was an essential part of its stable relationship with its God. It was necessary because dishonesty was bound up in the nature of man and it was fathered by the devil. Truth required laws and punishments to make sure that its importance was not lost.

God's words to us are promises that convey eternal truths on our behalf. God's very words, being truth are the certainties in a believer's life. We may rely on God's words alone, yet God graciously confirms them in other ways by signs and even oaths. Words of prophecy made more sure. *2Pe 1:19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:*

Does a promise stand if it is made under false conditions such as extortion or violence? No, it has not been conceived in the freedom of the will, but is coerced. If it was made under such conditions are

we bound to keep the promise? An obligation to do unrighteousness can never be binding, like paying bribes, or committing acts of murder for hire etc.

Does the teaching of the NT contradict the OT concerning promises and vows? Is this verse a forbidding to vow or swearing an oath? *Mat 5:33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths:*

Let us be careful as to what the Lord is teaching. He is teaching against perjury, that is breaking an oath, and the object of the perjury is God. We are more particularly treating the doctrine of vows here, that is service to God not man (see Appendix A, the Nazarite). In other words we are dealing specifically with acts of worship to God that need no expression of intent other than to do what you promised. The value is not enhanced by invoking other promissory terms. They are Evil.

The Sermon on the Mount is not dealing with oaths, or promises, but vows!

## The 8<sup>th</sup> COMMAND

### Law is based in the Nature of the Creator

To expand our consideration of the following 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Commands, I want to examine the postulate of Charles Hodge (Vol 3 p381 - Systematic Theology) and quote:

“With regard to the toleration of polygamy under the Mosaic law, it is to be remembered that the seventh commandment belongs to the same category as the sixth and eighth. **These laws are not founded on the essential nature of God, and therefore are not immutable.** They are founded on the permanent relations of men in their present state of existence. From this it follows,

1. That they bind men only in their present state. The laws of property and marriage can have no application, so far as we know, to the future world, where men shall be as angels, neither marrying nor giving in marriage.
2. These laws being founded on the permanent and natural relations of men, cannot be set aside by human authority, because those relations are not subject to the will or ordinance of men.
3. They may however be dispensed with by God. He commanded the Israelites to despoil the Egyptians and to dispossess the Canaanites, but this does not prove that one nation may, of its own motion, seize on the inheritance of another people. If God, therefore, at any time and to any people granted permission to practise polygamy, then so long as that permission lasted and for those to whom it was given, polygamy was lawful, and at all other times and for all other persons it was unlawful. This principle is clearly recognized in what our Saviour teaches concerning divorce. It was permitted the Jews under the Mosaic law to put away their wives; as soon as that law was abolished, the right of divorce ceased.”

The failure to see at the basis of all law, a facet of Divine order, leads to a superficial approach to morality and ultimately the disposal of the OT. I do not say that Hodge intends this, but it can come out in remarks like this.

All laws apply in an immediate sense to the author, they are all part of the pedagogic system leading us to Christ, they also establish themselves through our relationship with Christ. I shall show that the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Commands are based on the essential nature of God and are not solely to dominate the relationships of men with men. The law was at heart the basis of a Covenant with Jehovah. It described the relationship between God and man and man and man. As we have said, the Apodictic law is explained in the Case law and that case law is found in both Testaments.

Is Hodge correct to say, “The laws of property and marriage can have no application, so far as we know, to the future world, where men shall be as angels, neither marrying nor giving in marriage”. This comment is about the future state of human relationships. It merely says that human marital relationships are discontinued in the future state. It does not say that there will be no marriage, because all that marriage signified, the relationship between Christ and His Church is consummated in that future state. Marriage clearly has application and it is applied in its fullest and highest sense.

Is Hodge correct to say, “If God, therefore, at any time and to any people granted permission to practise polygamy, then so long as that permission lasted and for those to whom it was given, polygamy was lawful, and at all other times and for all other persons it was unlawful”? I do not find that polygamy was ever **unlawful**, although it restricts a man’s role in the church and a polygamist cannot be a minister.

The OT does not change the laws of adultery. We may not have understood it correctly, but the Bible does not modify it. Whilst polygamy appears, it appears within the framework of the 7<sup>th</sup> Command. The one man, one wife is from the creation ordinance and this is the NT requirement. We must look at polygamy within this framework of polygamous relations. From the statements of Christ *Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it has been said, Thou shalt not commit adultery*. He is showing the true nature of the law. It evolved in an attitude of heart, and was the violation of a particular social order. Moses did give an “escape clause” for marriage. The cause of uncleanness is seen to be unchastity. (Deuteronomy 24 and Matthew 19). God’s intention in the creation was no separation in marriage for life (compare this with the spiritual perseverance of the Bride in the new Life).

With the fall, the hardness of man’s hearts, their ability not to forgive and show mercy, gives one solution to a problem marriage, separation. It is not however commanded as a sentence. The Pharisees abused it. In John chapter 8, Christ’s forgiving is not removing the law of stoning the adulteress! There are just no witnesses that the law required, because they all walk away. John chapter 8 is not abrogating or disputing the punishment for adultery, it is establishing the character of the judges. This is a hint against John Murray’s assertion that the death sentence for it is removed.

Is Hodge correct to say, “It was permitted the Jews under the Mosaic law to put away their wives; as soon as that law was abolished, the right of divorce ceased.” There are two points here that we shall return to, firstly that Divorce still exists but it is far more restricted as to the reasons that permit it. Secondly, the reason for such a broad sweep of reasons for allowing divorce was not in the heart of God, it was in the hard heart of man. It reflected the fallen human nature and its evil heart that lacked forgiveness and that cried for vengeance.

Because the Israelites spoiled the nations does not imply theft on their part! The sovereignty of God and His Eminent Domain<sup>7</sup> allow it (Sovereignty and ownership in the Bible is God’s alone). God had the right to distribute and re-distribute His Divine property, and in the taking of the lands, the Israelite was the receiving from God’s hand the promise to Abraham in Genesis chapter 15. The earth is the Lord’s, man is only a tenant, hence the Jubilee and restoration of original ownership. The fact that God does this is not a reason that man can do this (as Ahab did).

The laws of wilful murder are not abrogated or tempered. The punishment is not disputed by Christ. What Jesus is saying is that the 6<sup>th</sup> Command had been tampered with by men. *Mat 5:21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: Mat 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is **angry with his brother without a cause** shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca,*

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<sup>7</sup> The right of a government or its agent to expropriate private property for public use, with payment of compensation. Ahab offered Naboth compensation for his vineyard but encouraged by his wife murdered and stole it.

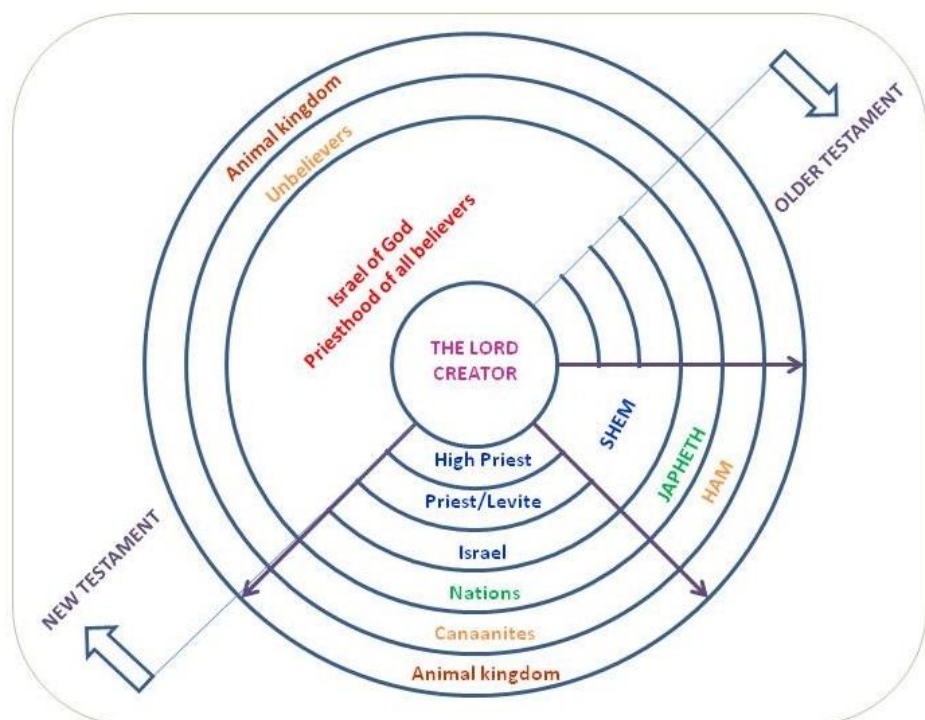
*shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.* Jesus says effectively, that in God's eyes, hatred and character assassination are murder. To be right with God in this command we must not even hate a man.

As the law does not punish our intent, we can only exercise the penalty on a crime committed, but God exercises the penalty on the intent of the heart. The OT implied these truths. *Lev 19:17 Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt earnestly rebuke thy neighbour, lest thou bear sin on account of him. Lev 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge thyself, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am Jehovah.*

What we are going to see in these commands is that they have a different effect in the nation state of Israel, as the circumstances of the offence vary (manslaughter is different from murder but both are covered under the 6<sup>th</sup> Command). This is very important. It shows a structure underlying the moral law which in places raised the commandment to a higher or more refined meaning and in others gives a far more generous allowance to man.

The Commands are never abrogated (repealed), but their sense is complicated by social structure. Slaves and free were affected in different ways by the law. The freer the man, the closer he gets to his God, the more limited and harsh are the interpretations of the moral law. *Mat 19:10 His disciples say to him, If the case*

*of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.* The Kingdom laws are more rigorous in their regulation of life, because we are nearer to God. Only the Spirit can enable us to fulfil these laws. Suffice to say that the apparent unfairness and lack of equality in OT case law is indicative of a higher principle.



It is that the Perfection of the Law which is found in the Proximity to God. As we have noted, Hodge was wrong to suggest that marriage ceases with this life. It does not, it assumes its highest meaning in our relationship to our Saviour.

Christ establishes the law on its true footing and stamps on the fountain of sin. *Mar 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, go forth evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Mar 7:22 thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, deceit, licentiousness, a wicked eye, injurious language, haughtiness, folly; Mar 7:23 all these wicked things go forth from within and defile the man.*



The ten commands are issued to the heart of a man. The finger of God promised this in Jeremiah. *Jer 31:33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 2Co 3:2 \*Ye\* are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read of all men.* Under the first covenant, the law was a restraint to the flesh (like the Gadarenes chains in Mark 5), but at Christ's appearance it frees us from the bondage of the letter, to the liberty of the spirit, which means the true spiritual outworking of the law.

We observe, in seeing the OT laws, that the NT in no ways modifies the punishments of the crimes (providing that the lawful God ordained authority to execute them on behalf of the community is present). We shall answer in time the difficult question of the Christians relationship to law and punishment and legislating for the biblical penalties. What we say for now is that the Christian is a citizen of another Kingdom that does not exercise physical violence on the person, in contrast to the magistrates of this world who bear the sword and they do not bear it in vain.

Under the Mosaic law there was no court of appeal against Divine sentences. Man was not to pity the criminal. Today, national laws are no longer a sentence to be executed on conviction, but a guideline for punishments. In other words interpretation of the law is no longer God's right because man is become his own god and the situation is changed. Man issues the law and acts according to his own feelings so law is no longer law, it is a philosophy.

A point to note is that where the law is seen to be enforced and "law officers" are apparent, restraints are exercised. The question Christians should ask themselves is, "What is the value of a law abiding society that rejects God?" It is not our kingdom although the advantage is I suggest, enlightened self interest. *1Ti 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; 1Ti 2:2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

I return to the remark that the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Commands are not based in the essential nature of God as being incorrect (they do reflect His nature). Killing is regarded in the Bible as destroying the image of God. As hatred, it is rebellion against the creator. Adultery is the unsanctified attitude of men to God's holiness. John the Baptist knew the symptoms of this generation. Theft is also a crime against God in not fulfilling God's laws. Theft, adultery, murder are attitudes against God's nature in His Glory, His Holiness and His Moral Values.

### Theft of what?

The command not to steal has no qualifying clause, it does not imply that thou shalt not steal from men only! Further it does not refer the theft to material gains, i.e. thou shalt not steal real estate only! The command is open ended (covetousness was an aspect of heart theft, that dealt with property). What the command is laying down is that a man has the right to ownership. Theft (גנב = gâ nab) means to take away secretly and also to deceive. This opens the command to the nature of that theft, which is taking without the owner's permission, taking without the owners consent be he God or man, with intent of self gain. This may then be the theft of:

1. Property,
2. Information (theft of knowledge, infringement of privacy),

3. Usurping authority (theft of sovereignty),
4. Killing (theft of life),
5. Rape (theft of purity) makes it sound as if the rape of a non-virgin is not as bad. It is just as bad.
6. Neglect of duty (as in unfaithfulness, *Mal 3:8 Will a man rob God? But ye rob me. And ye say, Wherein do we rob thee? In tithes and heave-offerings*).
7. False prophets (theft of the word of God) *Jer 23:30 Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith Jehovah, that steal my words every one from his neighbour.*
8. Withholding dues (Debt, theft of wages) *Lev 19:13 Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbour, neither rob him. The wages of the hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.*

The 8<sup>th</sup> command is a guardian against the failure of the 9<sup>th</sup>, not to covet. We have under previous discussion laid down the right of ownership, which descended from the sovereign allocation of property and wealth. The OT law enabled us to maintain the right of ownership by force<sup>8</sup>, but gives us the principles of transfer, purchase and just dealings. The failure of a member of the society to comply brings a sanction, a penalty. In the Bible prisons as we know them do not exist. A holding place was for the period to determine the guilt of a suspect. A prison is never a place of penitence or restoration under God's law. How can locking someone up repair the damage done to a victim? The only concept of prison in the Bible is the eternal chains of the gloomy dark *Jud 1:6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.* A spiritual captivity of the afterlife.

OT Biblical penalties are:

1. Stoning (lapidation) for incest
2. Burning
3. Beheading or the sword
4. Strangling (according to some, but hanging after death)
5. Stripes (corporal)
6. Hand cut off
7. Eye for an eye
8. Restitution plus compensation
9. Fines.

But nowhere is prison mentioned. The reason I think that the Bible does not see prison as a punishment, is that the withdrawal of liberty is no satisfaction of justice and equity. Furthermore it is no cure to the evil heart. God specifies Death for certain crimes. If there is any cure, it is bought to the individual by the new birth.

A further disadvantage of the prison system is that it inflicts injury to the public twice. Once in the crime and again in the support of the offender in confinement. The Bible's justice is swift and often dramatic. It is in its concept fair and the injuries inflicted are proportionately punished. The system of

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<sup>8</sup> *Exo 22:2 If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. Exo 22:3 If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him; for he should make full restitution; if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.* Again, this is a reflection of the hard heart because Jesus suggests we let it go.

punishment will be reserved for a later study but let us be convinced that prison is man's method and it is unjust, unlawful by Bible standards and softens Justice.

### Theft and taxes

Now we will cover the origins of ownership and the growth of the state sanctioned taxation, otherwise known as collective robbery. Having studied ownership under the 10<sup>th</sup> Command, we look a little closer at ownership and the limits of possession, with the aim to see the legality of taxes and state ownership.

The distribution of all wealth, not just the wealth of Israel was given by the hand of God. *Deu 32:8 When the Most High **assigned to the nations their inheritance**, When he separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. Deu 32:9 For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.*

This shows clearly that the world was arranged around God's covenant people, Jehovah's portion is his people. Further it tells us that the nations are ordered by God's providential Government. Paul further shows that God's interest also extended to the welfare of all nations that they might be spiritually benefitted. *Act 17:26 and has made of one blood every nation of men to dwell upon the whole face of the earth, having determined ordained times and the boundaries of their dwelling.* In the OT the centre of seeking is Israel, in the NT it is the church, the Israel of God, the Kingdom of God.

There are boundaries that God puts up to separate nations:

1. Beliefs
2. Geographic boundaries
3. Climate
4. Mobility
5. Natural resources
6. Death
7. Famine
8. Pestilence
9. War

We can see that each of these continues to influence human relationships and the interaction of nations. "Truly, the earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof". Having seen that people are gathered and planted by God, what form of Government is expedient? The Bible sets the perfect example in a Theocracy, where man lives under God's direction and order and has security of tenure as a result of obedience to the Creator. A look at the development of our own British constitution and the state of our nation shows the pitfalls of avoiding Divine order.

It becomes fairly obvious that in a world of sin, that man of necessity had to band together to defend property and persons. *Gen 14:14 And Abram heard that his brother was taken captive; and he led out his trained servants, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them as far as Dan,* shows Abraham to have done this. This then leads to the election within a group of suitable leaders renown for wisdom, strength and knowledge. This generates a social structure that hinges about

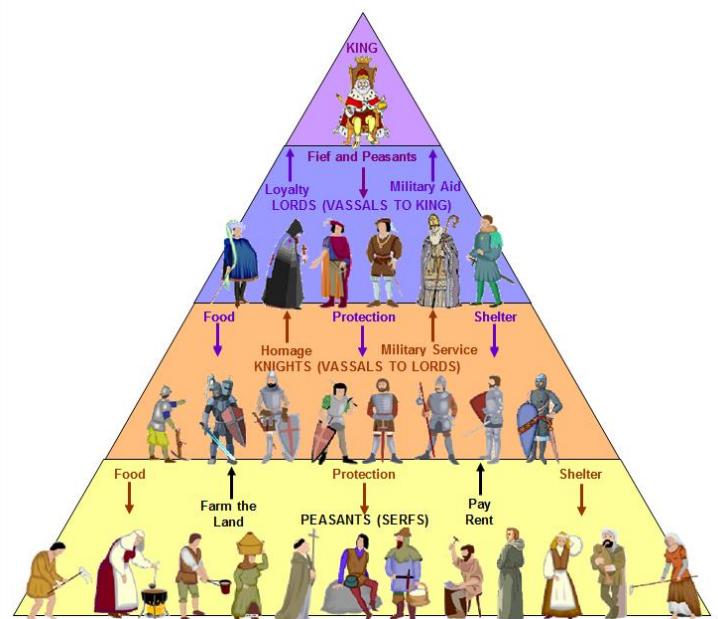
ability. Without God as supreme head the nations had elected kings to rule over them. In Israel the Divine King was eventually rejected for an earthly king. *1Sa 8:7 And Jehovah said to Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.*

A king's duty was to save *1Sa 10:27 But the children of Belial said, How should this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no gifts. But he was as one deaf.* And this is not only from enemies without, but strife within. This form of Government is called Absolute Monarchy. As Louis XIV said "L'etat c'est moi", I am the state.

It must follow that, born into such a system, we must be subject to the king in civil matters. This does not give the king the right to take Ecclesiastical matters into his hand if he is not spiritually equipped. The king should, by virtue of God's order, be obeyed as far as is conformable to Divine law (*Ius Divinum*) *Rom 13:1 Let every soul be subject to the authorities that are above him . For there is no authority except from God; and those that exist are set up by God. Rom 13:2 So that he that sets himself in opposition to the authority resists the ordinance of God; and they who thus resist shall bring sentence of guilt on themselves. Rom 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to a good work, but to an evil one . Dost thou desire then not to be afraid of the authority? practise what is good, and thou shalt have praise from it; Rom 13:4 for it is God's minister to thee for good. But if thou practisest evil, fear; for it bears not the sword in vain; for it is God's minister, an avenger for wrath to him that does evil. Rom 13:5 Wherefore it is necessary to be subject, not only on account of wrath, but also on account of conscience.*

In England the land was, up to the time of William I, a series of territories with local chieftains. The English "stock" was Frisian, Jutes, Saxon, Angles, Danes, Swedes, Norwegians and Vikings. By strife and integration they had come to exist together. They were moved by a barbarous satanic greed for self gratification. They obtained by theft (not as traders such as the Phoenicians who had gained wealth by legitimate business). William (the Conqueror) had a claim by birth to the throne of Britain by being Edward the Confessors cousin (Harold killed at Hastings, was Edward's brother-in-law). The victory at Hastings was aided by the nation's disunity (Harold having come hot foot from fighting Norwegians in Yorkshire).

A fruit of the victory and the governing genius of William was that we British got a structured Kingdom. The Domesday book (1086) was a compilation of the property and stock of the nation and gave a quick indication of the power of a tenant and the taxes required. Property was diversified and thus power no longer resided in local pockets of ownership.



The Feudal system that operated (Fiefdom, from fief = a fee, property or cattle, a territory held in fee) was a form of tenancy agreement. The lords gave rights to land for payment by so many days labour a week. (This is almost a biblical form of distribution because it carried with it rights to inherit). The Lords came to their manor to eat because, as travel was almost impossible, especially in winter with no real road system, it was easier to go to the food than bring the food to the Lord. This form of Government and ownership is also acceptable by biblical standard as it does encourage stewardship and labour. The Great Charter, the Magna Carta, of 1215 was also a security for religious freedom (1<sup>st</sup> 65 articles), weakening the Catholic yoke.

Edward 1<sup>st</sup> was obliged to confirm the Magna Carta with an additional clause that the king should not levy taxes in excess of accustomed aid, save by common consent of the realm. This then marks the transition from absolute to constitutional monarchy with the origin of the parliamentary system of people's representation.

Through the war torn years, the Wars of the "Roses" and the turbulence of the reformation period, England emerges as a nation independent and self governing. The high point may well have been under the commonwealth of Cromwell (as far as Christians are concerned) where church/state functioned together in the Government of the people.

The industrial revolution rapidly brought about the centralisation of power in wealth, but not as the land system, but by mechanisation. The power of land owners fell after repeal of the corn laws (1846) following the Irish potato famine, removing grain tariffs (under Prime minister Peel). Income tax came in 1796 and after a lapse (1816 – 1842) was reintroduced. In the USA, state and federal inheritance taxes began after 1900, while the states (but not the federal government) began collecting sales taxes in the 1930s. The United States imposed income taxes briefly during the Civil War and the 1890s, and on a permanent basis from 1913.

Once there is a means of collection anything can be taxed. In 1660, England placed a tax on fireplaces. The tax led to people covering their fireplaces with bricks to conceal them and avoid paying the tax. It was repealed in 1689. Window tax was originally introduced to make up for losses caused by clipping of coinage<sup>9</sup> during the reign of William III, the tax was based on the number of windows in a house. It was a banded tax, for instance, in 1747 for a house with ten to fourteen windows, the tax stood at 6 pence per window, fifteen to nineteen windows, 9 pence, and exceeding twenty or more, 1 shilling. The tax was raised six times between 1747 and 1808. By then the lowest band started at six windows. This was raised in 1825 to eight windows. People started to avoid paying by blocking up windows. The tax was repealed in 1851 after campaigners argued that it was a 'tax on health', and a 'tax on light and air', as well as being an unequal tax with the greatest burden on the middle and lower classes. Under UK tax law, biscuits and cakes are deemed as necessities and are exempt from VAT. Chocolate covered biscuits, however, are luxury goods and taxed at 20%. This forced McVities to go and prove that Jaffa Cakes are cakes at a tribunal. They won.

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<sup>9</sup> Coin clipping is the practice of cutting small pieces from coins. Coins were once made of pure gold and silver, and through everyday use were subject to wear. It was not usual to receive a coin which was not perfectly round. So cutting or filing a small amount off the coin would probably go unnoticed. The cut-off pieces would then be melted into a bar and sold to a goldsmith, or used to make counterfeit coins.

Industrial society may require more capital for development (investment in equipment), more efficient communication for best returns and competitive growth. This requires a vastly greater income than could be derived from crop taxes. As we have seen, Governments will make up the tax rules as they go along. Juggling with taxes, mortgage rates, printing money (tax evasion) and so on, to raise funds is an interference with civil rights of ownership. After possession is confirmed and ownership is established, in biblical terms changing the rules is theft. Printing money (so called quantitative easing) is theft by devaluing other people's wealth.

The Government should represent and serve the interests of the nation, not specific groups, so as a Christian do we have a duty to our country to fight against social injustice? It may not be our world but it is one way to show that God operates differently to the sin soaked kingdom of man and many of the great social reformers were Christians and it is part of the Gospel. We might consider:

1. The process of re-education to the nature and basis of law, our individual responsibility is to understand God's law.
2. The duty of mankind to serve and glorify his God.
3. The rebuke of injustice. Going the extra mile when it is a right, but always standing for God's laws.
4. As tax payers we should be concerned as to where our money is spent and on what. If the Government is stealing by injustice and inequity we should protest with our reasons. If it is spending immorally, we protest it. Responsibility is the duty of all, we owe it to God, our family, our bodies, our labour etc.

Christian "other worldliness" is often an excuse not to get involved with injustice.

#### God's taxes

God has a form of taxation but God taxes the **increase** of productivity at a linear rate and not the capital. A man on £5,000 pays £500, a man on £10,000 pays £1,000. This is the tithe system. A tax on land or property is an imposition on the right to earn because the earth is the Lord's, *Exo 9:29 And Moses said to him, When I go out of the city, I will spread out my hands to Jehovah: the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail; that thou mayest know that the earth is Jehovah's.*

The tithes (see Covetousness and the tithe, above) were used for ecclesiastical and civil functions, also welfare. Profits were also dependent on righteousness (i.e. Submission to God and His law and order). The other tax (Poll) was the national tribute to the King (the Lord) for his Divine oversight. *Exo 30:11 And Jehovah spoke to Moses, saying, Exo 30:12 When thou shalt take the sum of the children of Israel according to those of them that are numbered, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul to Jehovah on their being numbered, that there be no plague among them on their being numbered. Exo 30:13 This shall they give--every one that passeth among them that are numbered--half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary, --twenty gerahs the shekel; a half shekel shall be the heave-offering for Jehovah. Exo 30:14 Every one that passeth among those that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give the heave-offering of Jehovah. Exo 30:15 The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when ye give the heave-offering of Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls. Exo 30:16 And thou shalt take the atonement-money of the*

*children of Israel, and devote it to the service of the tent of meeting; and it shall be a memorial to the children of Israel before Jehovah, to make atonement for your souls.*

In the hands of men, taxes are a means to establish totalitarianism<sup>10</sup>, man's Kingdom against God's. In God's hands taxes promote righteousness, an interest in religion and dependence upon the Divine providence. The Bible teaches that we have a duty to Governments and magistrates to pay taxes regardless of the Governmental origin as God has determined their existence, to render to Caesar the things of Caesar. *Mat 17:24 When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax came to Peter. They asked him, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?" Mat 17:25 "Certainly," he answered. Peter went into the house. Before he could speak, Jesus asked him, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the world collect fees or taxes? Is it from their family members or from other people?" Mat 17:26 "From other people," Peter answered. Jesus said to him, "Then the family members are exempt. Mat 17:27 However, so that we don't create a scandal, go to the sea and throw in a hook. Take the first fish that you catch. Open its mouth, and you will find a coin. Give that coin to them for you and me."* GW. We should not deceive or defraud even if it is an unjust tax. We should pay and then protest if necessary.

It is the Christian duty to his society to be salt and light. *Mat 5:13 Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.* We must declare the foundations of God's society, the Kingdom of God which is part of the Gospel not as rebels but as peacemakers. This is not passivity, opting out, it is standing up to the works of the devil and it is how we fight "Principalities and Powers".

If taxes appear unjust we should speak out otherwise we may just be condoning theft in this field of taxation.

#### Theft and restitution.

*Heb 5:8 though he were Son, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered.* Jesus "learned" obedience by suffering (that is experientially tasted it), so then, as He was sinless it was **not** punishment for sin. A man may suffer for righteousness (Abel, Job) but this suffering is not always punishment or physical chastisement. Physical affliction is not always for sin but it can come from the effects of sin, living in a world with "jagged edges", a world where the effects of sin leaves "thorns and thistles" in our way, *Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field.*

Discipline does not always involve physical punishment and there is confusion over this. We often say discipline when we mean punishment. Discipline is 'discipling' or conforming to a standard and occasionally it may involve punishment. The Gospel is about 'discipling', *Mat 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them to the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.*

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<sup>10</sup> **Totalitarianism** is a political system where the state recognizes no limits to its authority and strives to regulate every aspect of public and private life wherever feasible.

Chastisement is making a person chaste, it often involves physical discomfort *Heb 12:5 And ye have quite forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when reprov'd by him.* Chastening (παιδεία = paideia = training) comes from the word for 'child' so this is God's behaviour to His children.

Punishment is the inflicting of a penalty to satisfy justice. Why? *Pro 17:26 To punish a righteous man is not good, nor to strike nobles because of their uprightness.* We are used to a system of justice which has coloured our thinking and prejudiced us to God's way. I have said before that God's system has no prison which may seem strange to us, but it is fundamental to understanding God's ways of dealing with lawbreakers. Let us accept God's ways not whimpering that we are more humane than God or know better than God in our so called enlightened age. The Potter knows more about what is right for the pot than the pot.

Prisons do not tend to create order, they exist to punish the offender. They do not deal with the problem incurred on society or help the victim of the crime. We owe a lot of moral confusion to those good people, the early Quakers. In 1796 they opened a clinic for the mentally ill and began their journey from justice to imaginative compassion. This seemingly good work was the way prisons were treated (1813) in easing the condition of the inmates, i.e. dealing with effects not causes. It was never considered whether prisons were right, only that they needed modifying. This trend has continued to the state now where prisons have a messianic role. That is the sole idea is to confine the prisoner to reform him. They are penitentiaries, reformatories, correction centres. All well and good, but this is God's duty not mans.

Anyone who thinks environment maketh the man is a fool and should consider that Eden, God's perfect environment was the place of the fall. Punishment does not reform a man, neither was it intended to. The law, the moral virtues classified, was the road to reform as they convinced the man as a sinner before God. A Schoolmaster to bring us to Christ as Paul puts it. *Gal 3:24 So that the Law has become a trainer of us until Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* LITV.

Punishment does not convict the guilty, although the law might convict him. It is not the principle aim of punishment to make a man see his crime (Cain and Abel – Cain knew his punishment, but had no remorse). If punishment was designed to convict the heart it was a failure. Yet some still hold this idea that you can redeem yourself through punishment, you can pay a price to God for your sin and restore favour. This leads in turn to the softening of eternal punishment because it is based on punishment as redemptive and eventually people will buy their way out of hell.

Now if we are agreed upon what punishment "does not" do, let us see firstly what it does by an illustration. A pendulum will swing one way and then the force of gravity causes it to return. The pendulum swings about a point. It is a form of restoration of position. This is the golden principle of Divine justice. It is the restoration of order. An example is restoring something damaged or stolen, back to the victim, with compensation. The offence may be so great that there is no means of restoring order but by the death of the transgressor (the life for the life) but the principle holds true.

Punishment is restoration and it is the basis of redemption. If we are to be just in judgement like our God we too must aim to implement restitution. However there are two sides to this process. One is



towards man and one towards God. Restoration to man is on a finite level and capable to being met whereas, Godward the offence is infinite and we have no means of paying. This is why God must pay our wages, “the wages of sin is death”. Restoration is made through Christ, *Rom 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is everlasting life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”. This part of the penalty, the Godward aspect is settled by deed of gift, but it still requires the penalty of eternal separation to be paid. The merits of Christ in this respect are sufficient to propitiate the Father on our behalf.

I have said that the moral law existed in the lives of the fathers in Genesis. “The ultimate acts of God are implicit in His former acts”. Thus Cain appreciates the sentence of capital punishment for the killing of Abel. *Gen 4:14 Behold, thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground, and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a wanderer and fugitive on the earth; and it will come to pass, that every one who finds me will slay me.* But how can God set aside this sentence without doing contradictory to the rest of scripture? Read R J Rushdoony Institutes of Biblical Law Page 359.

This brings us to our major question: why, then, in apparent contradiction to the rest of Scripture, does God move here to protect Cain from being killed? Protection for crime was clearly not God’s purpose. At every point, Scripture reveals God as the enemy of sin, and His demand for judgment is so strict and unwavering, that only the death of Jesus Christ could make atonement for sin by fulfilling the law to the full. Obviously, then, God’s purpose here was not the protection of Cain; rather, the protection of Cain was a by-product of His central purpose. God Himself is revealed as Cain’s accuser, and the very earth, because God created it, witnesses to God’s law against Cain (Gen. 4:9-12). The question we must ask, then, is this: what kind of law order was God maintaining which incidentally led to Cain’s protection? This is the key question, and, unfortunately, commentators do not ask it.

.....The remarkable protection of Cain from the death penalty was due to the fact that the family was barred from an area of law enforcement, the death penalty, which properly belongs to the state. In Cain’s day, mankind was made up of Adam and Eve and a number of sons and daughters. “A sign of guaranty” was given to Cain that he would not be executed by his parents or by his brothers and sisters. Very obviously, the family was informed of this, because this part of Genesis (1:1-5:1) is Adam’s record. Later Cain built the first city, i.e., a walled community, to protect himself. Cain did not require protection from Adam’s household; he did require it from his own progeny. We have Lamech’s declaration of his readiness to kill if his honour were wounded (Gen. 4:23-24); significantly, Lamech simply stepped up the lawlessness Cain had practiced: “If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold” (Gen. 4:24).

..... If God had not barred the family from killing guilty members, even at the price of allowing Cain to go free, the price would have been a fearful one. On the one hand, the development of the state as God’s ministry of justice would have been impossible. The realm of the state would then have been pre-empted by the family. On the other hand, the family itself would have been destroyed by this new burden. The world would have been an anarchistic order, family arrayed against family, and the family arrayed

against itself. It was thus not Cain whom God protected but, in reality, God's own law order.

This is a novel explanation, but I ask the following questions.

1. How many generations do you have to be removed from a family member before you can administer law?
2. If God gave the sentence, and Cain knew people who would fulfil it, then the family has the right to administer justice. Why give a sentence of punishment if it cannot be inflicted?

The point is well made that justice was administered through the government of Israel and not individuals. There were limits as to how far you could discipline before it became a matter for the community. *Deu 21:18 If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not listen to his father's voice, or his mother's voice; even though they discipline him, he will not listen to them; Deu 21:19 then his father and his mother shall lay hold on him and bring him out to the elders of his city, and to the gate of his place; Deu 21:20 and they shall say to the elders of his city, This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not listen to our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard.*

I think this opens up another avenue of thought.

1. The death sentence is carried out with witnesses not by circumstantial evidence. The justice is metered with coolness and impartiality on sworn evidence.
2. The offence Cain committed was against God. God exercised His prerogative to forgive or commute or execute. "Vengeance is mine sayeth the Lord, I will repay". The ultimate domain of punishments is God's. Life is God's.

Cain receives a sign of God's mercy from the avenger but this does not mean that Cain has his sins forgiven! The point Rushdoony makes about justice has some truth in it. There are realms of influence. I can beat my child under the OT (by Divine consent) but not your child. That is your domain. I cannot under a community system execute a man without a trial even if I know of his guilt. I must submit to the larger family of the tribe or state. This is gaining the communities ear, so that the act of purging might be a corporate act because of a corporate offence.

Achan's guilt is national guilt - *Jos 7:13 Rise up, hallow the people, and say, Hallow yourselves for tomorrow; for thus saith Jehovah the God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, Israel: thou shalt not be able to stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from your midst.* Achan is killed *Jos 7:25 And Joshua said, How hast thou troubled us! Jehovah will trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stone.* The branches too are purged and his family dies with him, for they were a party to it.

This tells us something about stoning. It was the corporate rejection of the guilty member. Everyone had the duty to kill the offender. The simplest way to enable this is stoning (lapidation). This form appears to be used for the theocratic guilt which is transmitted to the nation. The fire destroys and purges the remnants of evil.

Restoration is at the heart of David's great Psalm, *Psa 23:3 He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Act 3:21 whom heaven indeed must receive till the times of the restoring of all things, of which God has spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets since time began. Gal 6:1 Brethren, if even a man be taken in some fault, ye who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of meekness, considering thyself lest thou also be tempted.*

Restoration or redemption and peace go together and this is another aspect of law, peacekeeping. *Rom 5:1 Therefore having been justified on the principle of faith, we have peace towards God through our Lord Jesus Christ; Rom 5:2 by whom we have also access by faith into this favour in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God.*

#### Putting things right with men.

It is seen clearly that the bible shows the principle of restitution as part of the law of punishment. Certain crimes though were so heinous that a person's life was required to restore order in society. It in no way proved to be reconciliation to God. Reconciliation with man and with God are two separate issues.

Looking at this principle in regard to stealing we see the following penalties laid out in the law and we shall try to understand them.

1. Theft of cattle and disposal of it required 4 or 5 times the amount to be restored. *Exo 22:1 If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore **five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.***
2. Theft of property and being caught with it required 2 times the amount to be restored. *Exo 22:4 If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double. Exo 22:5 If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. Exo 22:6 If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. Exo 22:7 If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, **let him pay double.***
3. Theft of property but admission of guilt required 1.2 times the amount plus a sacrifice. *Lev 6:5 Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the **fifth part more thereto**, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering.*
4. Theft of a freeman is theft from God and carried the death penalty. God redeems the freeman. *Deu 24:7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that **thief shall die**; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.*

5. Theft of landmark carries a curse. *Deu 27:17 Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen.*

The questions we must ask are

1. Why the scale of restitution was chosen (i.e. 1. 1/5, 2, 4, 5) and not a linear scale
2. Why add anything not just give back what was taken?

Firstly, the ascending scale must tell us something about the degree of crime. A man who confesses is not as hardened as the man who continues to cover his crime. The man who confesses, loves justice and fears it not, in Bible terms he is on the way to becoming reconciled with God. *Zacheus Luk 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. Luk 19:9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. Luk 19:10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. Luk 23:39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* He has turned himself into law.

A man caught with it may have a need to be met in his own family. *Pro 6:30 Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry.* It is not excused and must be repaid. It may point to charity and tithing having lapses in the community, or a hardness of heart and despising the poor driving him to offence (the law of self preservation consistent with love). Yet he must be punished. It may be due to laziness, "I couldn't be bothered to ask so I took it".

Certainly the crime committed has not reached the stage of involving another party (i.e. receiving or in ignorance purchasing stolen property), or to the extent of a crime upon the property such as killing the animal. The man who goes that far, to trade in stolen goods is at the crime of thievery. He has no respect for ownership, property etc and is self-centred. He is one who harvests other men's labours, but only God has this right. This is Anarchy.

I think this gives us some reason to the the scale of punishment in the degree of offence. The scale may also reflect the value of an object in a hierarchy of property. Material goods have a lower value than live property. An ox has more value than a sheep.

Turning to the second point "why not just restore". Let us define a little more carefully the boundary of theft. We have shown that man can possess and that God safeguards possessions against the greed and lust of sinful men. However, God also regulates the use of that property by providence or law. By that I mean that God has given others access to your property by legitimate channels. Ahab sinned when he coveted Naboth's vineyard, but under the law he could have walked though it picking grapes and not be called a thief. Likewise the poor tithe was that portion of your yield which **you** could not store up, it was for the "miserable" of society.

This confronts us quite clearly with the fact that God has overriding control of our property. The law which safeguards us from man's greed, safeguards men from our greed and uncharitable conduct. We are stewards of God. God's ultimate power over our property, life, marriage and even truth. The ox could eat the corn it trod *Deu 25:4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.*

The poor could wander about your field and glean (Ruth). The stranger could take a handful of corn as he passed to satisfy hunger (Matthew 12). So there is a taking of property or possessions which is not stealing! The laws against theft hit at the criminal who would “feather his own nest” at the expense of his neighbour and do so by deceit and cunning.

If you want something, you may ask the owner. You may offer some exchange for the goods. You may offer work or money or kind for what you want. It may be that the person will willingly give. Thus by exercising patience and honesty with a consideration for the rights of ownership you avoid sin. In fact what you are showing is a heart conformed and loving to the law of God by faith. This is satisfying, conforming to the law of God by faith. *Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

The Westminster Larger catechism sums these points well:

Q. 131. What are the duties of equals?

A. The duties of equals are, to regard the dignity and worth of each other, in giving honour to go one before another; and to rejoice in each others’ gifts and advancement, as their own.

Q. 132. What are the sins of equals?

A. The sins of equals are, besides the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement of prosperity one of another; and usurping pre-eminence one over another.

Q. 141. What are the duties required in the eighth commandment?

A. The duties required in the eighth commandment are, truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man; rendering to everyone his due; restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof; giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others; moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods; a provident care and study to get, keep, use, and dispose these things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition; a lawful calling, and diligence in it; frugality; avoiding unnecessary lawsuits and suretiship, or other like engagements; and an endeavour, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.

Q. 142. What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving any thing that is stolen; fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing landmarks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust; oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious lawsuits, unjust inclosures and depopulations; ingrossing commodities to enhance the price; unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbour what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves; covetousness; inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods; distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them; envying at the prosperity of others; as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming; and all

other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate, and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us.

The offence to ownership is well illustrated in the following anecdote (Page 33. Anecdotes, Whitecross).

**The righteous man's harvest.** *Exo 22:4 If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double.*

In the last war (Napoleonic) in Germany, a captain of cavalry was out on a foraging party. On perceiving a cottage in the midst of a solitary valley, he went up and knocked at the door. Out came an aged Herrnhuter (better known by the name of United Brethren) with a beard silvered by age. "Father," says the officer, "show me a field where I can set my troopers a-foraging." "Presently" replied the Herrnhuter. The good old man walked before, and conducted them out of the valley. After a quarter of an hour's march, they found a fine field of barley. "There is the very thing we want," says the captain. "Have patience for a few minutes," replied his guide; "you shall be satisfied." They went on, and at the distance of about a quarter of a league farther, they at length reached another field of barley. The troop immediately dismounted, cut down the grain, trussed it up, and remounted. The officer, upon this, said to his conductor, "Father, you have given yourself and us unnecessary trouble: the first field was much better than this." "Very true, sir," replied the good old man, "but it was not mine." This stroke goes directly to the heart. I defy an Atheist to produce any thing to be compared to this. And surely he who does not feel his heart warmed by such an example of exalted virtue, has not yet acquired the first principles of moral taste.

Another anecdote on theft shows how ill gotten gains can bring their own sorrow.

A minister related how that when 7 years old being left in charge of his father shop, heard a man passing by crying, "Little lambs, all white and clean at one penny each". Being eager to get one of these toys, he lost self command, took money from the till and bought one. His mother asked how he got the money, but he evaded the question with a lie. The lamb was placed on the mantelpiece and was much admired, but to the boy it was a source of expressible anguish. There was a voice in his ears "Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not steal". In guilt and agony of soul, he went to the barn and pleaded for pardon, for Jesus sake. With joy he left with the comfort "My sins which are many are forgiven". He then went to his mother and confessed, asked forgiveness and burnt the lamb while the mother wept over her young penitent.

These anecdotes show us the practical sacrifices of ownership, the depriving of others of that which is lawfully theirs. We can now begin to see the importance of the scale of recompense, because the effects of sin cause so great a field of imbalance, a stone causing ripples that affects everything on a pond. We saw that there are degrees of complicity in the crime of theft. The further the act is taken the more harmful the consequences as more people get involved.

### Theft and the environment

To the farmer life was bound up in the providence of God with the rest of creation. There was an interdependence now rapidly being lost in our sheltered modern world. The shepherd needed sheep, but the sheep needed a shepherd. Certain of the commands were directly aimed at protecting creation (and through this giving us principles of Christian order). Today it is called ecology (from the Greek words *oikos* = house and *logos* = word/study) meaning the relationship of forms to its habitat.

Trees were protected species, *Deu 20:19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege.*

Animal welfare was important, *Deu 25:4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.* Species were protected from annihilation, *Deu 22:6 If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young:* Righteousness was exhibited by kindness to animals, *Pro 12:10 A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.*

On a historical note, it was men like William Wilberforce who began campaigning against animal cruelty in the UK. The organisation was founded in 1824 (without the "Royal" prefix) as the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and was established by a group of 22 reformers led by Richard Martin MP, William Wilberforce MP, and the Reverend Arthur Broome in "Old Slaughter's Coffee House", St Martin's Lane, near the Strand in London. The society was the first animal welfare charity to be founded in the world. In 1824 it brought sixty three offenders before the courts. It was granted its royal status by Queen Victoria in 1840 to become the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, as it is today

The Creator taught man to respect His creation and learn that the laws of God permeated every order of life. He was also taught to be careful for the next generation and protect their interests, to lay up not just spiritually but temporally, *2Co 12:14 Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.* What right have we to destroy creation, to chop a tree down because we don't like it, to systematically exterminate God's creatures by hunting for pleasure rather than need? Christianity in a very real way stops the abuse of the creature. Using animals for 'sport', blood sports so called demeans the creature. It is of note that bullfighting is predominately in Roman Catholic countries, where creatures are considered brutes. Catholics do not consider animals to have souls like humans.

The earth is the Lords, *Exo 9:29 And Moses said unto him, As soon as I am gone out of the city, I will spread abroad my hands unto the LORD; and the thunder shall cease, neither shall there be any more hail; that thou mayest know how that the earth is the LORD'S.* Man must be taught to recognise his dependency and stewardship. The Gospel after all was for the benefit of the whole creation.

In Genesis up to the time of the flood animals were not eaten by men. Man looked after them for God. Noah was given permission to eat the flesh, in past times eaten by God in sacrifice. However, animals were not bred solely for meat! Despite the famine Jacob did not resort to killing his flocks *Gen 47:3 And Pharaoh said unto his brethren, What is your occupation? And they said unto Pharaoh, Thy servants are shepherds, both we, and also our fathers. Gen 47:4 They said moreover unto Pharaoh, For to sojourn in the land are we come; for thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan: now therefore, we pray thee, let thy servants dwell in the land of Goshen.*

The utilization of animals was manifold in society and meat was not a prime use. Remember also that storing meat is never easy normally and less so in the hot lands of the Bible. Salt was a very expensive commodity to use in preserving, so meat was generally eaten on the day. Herds provided: milk, butter, wool, skins for tents and clothing (although unclean animals were also used, like camels) *Mat 3:4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.* As well as being sacrifices to Jehovah, they were used for ploughing, threshing and sometimes for company. *2Sa 12:3 But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.* Keeping pets is not out of harmony with Bible teaching.

The Ox because of its greater strength and therefore usefulness was rated higher in terms of its value. A man who lost his ox might not get his field ploughed in time for harvest, he might not be able to provide a sin offering, his corn might rot on the threshing floor as he vainly tried to pull the threshing sledge over it. In other words, to deprive a man of his creatures was also to deprive him of a living, his source of food supply for example, daily milk or deprive him of a source of power and labour. If stealing the creature was bad enough, to kill it or sell it was a crime against creation. Well did the Lord employ such high penalties and it can be seen why the ox has greater value.

#### Theft of the future

Stealing can cause untold misery, but because of the less obvious uses of articles and property, withholding them could cause a man to lose his life (theft of being). To take a man's coat on a pledge and not return it at night was to jeopardise the man's existence, then you might then be guilty of murder. *Deu 24:10 When thou dost lend thy brother any thing, thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge.* The pledge whatever it was, was put against a loan. *Deu 15:6 For the LORD thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow; and thou shalt reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over thee. Deu 15:7 If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother: Deu 15:8 But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth.*

There was a real value in the pledge, against the loan. As we saw earlier, the pledge is a way of transferring goods into cash, whilst retaining the goods as security, like the old Pawn shops. For a foreigner interest was paid on the loan and if the requirements were not met the pledge was forfeit. God allowed the needy access to the pledge if it was necessary to his life. If the person failed to



honour the pledge this failure would obligate slavery for a maximum of 7 years, which was probably the best of a bad situation.

We can see from the Divine pattern of lending that there was always collateral for a loan. In these days men are encouraged to become debtors. So called “credit” facilities enables easy access to commodities without collateral. You buy on credit. This gradually causes a man to steal from his future which he has not earned. It is a way of obtaining goods in a market without cash and it gives the appearance of prosperity but it is a fool’s prosperity. Governments do the same thing on a greater scale.

When the Governments sell and buy abroad they have no legal obligation to provide collateral. When asked to pay a debt, the way to reduce the value of the debt is to reduce the value of the exchange rate, which is inflating the value of the currency. This of course discourages people from collecting their debts because a run on the currency would bring the value of the currency down and so make the exchange rate worse.

Companies employ these tactics in getting capital. A large company was known to order goods of a high value thought a small company who had to raise capital by a loan to supply goods. The large company neglected to heed demands for payment (initiating court cases from start to finish). Meanwhile the small company was paying interest on its loans and was forced into bankruptcy. The large company paid its outstanding debt but for that period of the delay they had the advantage of the goods, their own capital to use and inflation eroding the real value of the debt. This is theft.

According to the press, grocery giants Tesco and Asda have been hit by a raft of county court judgments for not paying their debts showing a vastly worse record than rivals. The two groups between them were issued with 149 County Court judgements in the past six years (prior to 2016), out of 185 issued against all supermarkets. The findings, which emerged from research by credit research group Creditsafe, are particularly embarrassing for Tesco, which was rapped by the grocery watchdog for its treatment of suppliers. It is also still under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office for a £263million accounting scandal.

The Christian would well heed the Bible principles concerning money and loans.

1. *Rom 13:8 **Owe no man any thing**, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.* This does not preclude borrowing against a pledge. There will always be a real value set against the loan. This keeps interest rates down as the company loaning does not have to cover itself against bad debt by charging excessively high interest. It is “counter inflationary”.
2. Be prompt in payment. You have received the goods, pay up. Delaying is a form of speculation and is also theft. Milk, gas, electricity etc. This also goes for goods you have borrowed.
3. Do not covet money. The “fondness for Silver” is the root of all evil and men who are greedy are seldom equitable.
4. Do no overreach one another. Value articles fairly and see things from your neighbours position.

5. Beware of unsecured loans and other forms of credit, you know “not what tomorrow” might require of your resources. You cannot honestly commit the future for today’s benefits. An emergency would make you a debtor, a thief and a bad witness for Christ. We can lay up for a winter, but we should never draw on the future which is known only by God. Save up for it!

### Policing property

Concerning restitution after theft, we find nothing in the scriptures to show that this law has been annulled or in any way weakened by the work of Christ. The moral base “Thou shalt not steal” stands firm, therefore also the principles governing property and its return. No thief has a place in God’s Kingdom, *1Co 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.* We should always encourage men towards the institution of restoration and view other so called forms of penalty that do not encourage restoration with a critical eye.

We may further extend guilt to a third party who is involved as an observer of a crime and who does nothing to hinder the felony. The idea of policemen as agents of the people, trained in crime prevention, as an extension of the citizen’s power, has only become a reality in recent history. It was not always so. Rather than encouraging the enforcement of law, the police system operates against itself by excluding the public from its activities. The police become a separate entity and often an object of derision assumed to be working against the public.

Biblical law makes the bystander an accomplice. *Deu 22:1 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. Deu 22:2 And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and **thou shalt restore it to him again.** Deu 22:3 In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: **thou mayest not hide thyself.** Deu 22:4 Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and **hide thyself from them:** thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.* Theft is established here as the neglect of assistance to ones neighbours. The 8<sup>th</sup> Command clearly demands more than abstinence from appropriating another’s property by fraud or cunning. It is also covers the direct lack of assistance to a victim and it is punishable by law.

Protecting property did not breach the observance of the Sabbath law. *Mat 12:11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?* Christ Jesus magnifies the most important aspect of this protection. It is in the restoring of health to man. To neglect a man’s is to steal the injured man’s life. It is not for the Doctor to kill, but to restore health.

We may now question the rights of an individual who is suffering a felony. *Mat 12:11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?* This implies that we render aid because as the Psalmist says, *Psa 50:18 When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers.* We have in this the origin of “hue and cry”. The pursuit of a felon by officers of justice in which all who witnessed it were bound to participate. The “posse” has some warrant here, the legal process of pursuing the felon with “horn and voice”.

This like the other practices has now been dropped in favour of hired enforcement, police officers. It still remains that In cases of treason every subject of the crown is justified in arresting and detaining a felon for trial without warrant. It is also possible to make a citizen's arrest and "take another into custody who commits a breach of peace in his presence".

Justice also works speedily to release the innocent. *Pro 24:11 If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; Pro 24:12 If thou sayest, Behold, we knew it not; doth not he that pondereth the heart consider it? and he that keepeth thy soul, doth not he know it? and shall not he render to every man according to his works?* This is Solomon's comment. The principle no doubt establishes the duties of the Gospel to warn men of their error and declare God's council. *Act 20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.* Like Ezekiel *Eze 33:6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.* The watchman was guilty for not warning the people if the people were guilty.

Germany's 'Good Samaritan' law also requires you to stop and render aid if people need help, even if you are not a party to or did not witness the accident. Failure to assist carries fines and possible imprisonment. France and Italy have similar laws. Responsibility is a key part of the 8<sup>th</sup> Command and citizens are encouraged to act for the benefit of the community.

There were no juvenile courts in Israel. The parents administered justice and righteousness in judgement. If parental authority had broken down or failed to be heeded it was brought to the attention of the Elders. This implies the parents are also responsible for their children's actions. *Deu 21:18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them.* This shows that the failure to submit to parental authority ultimately invoked the death penalty. It is the principle that to reject the judgement of the community is to lose the privileges of the community. *Deu 21:18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them.*

You become a permanent outcast from the Israel of God.

### Punishment and the Church

I suggest from this action (the action of the parents to their child) in civil terms, means that the thief or habitual criminal, the man who will not reform himself, must be executed under the OT. Remember that we saw that prisons do not reform. So does the Church still exercise the death penalty? No. Offences against the church are usually dealt with by exclusion. *1Co 5:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: 2Th 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

The Church does not punish with corporal or capital sentences. This does not mean that corporal and capital punishments do not occur in the Church. Perhaps we should view these sentences as the chastisement of God. To understand this, we must see that the Kingdom of which we are citizens, is

not of this world. Our King is on a heavenly throne not the throne of this world. *Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: **but now is my kingdom not from hence.** Joh 18:37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*

Ananias and his wife Sapphira suffered death for deceit at the hands of God. *Act 5:9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out. Act 5:10 Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.*

Members of the Corinthian Church suffered sickness and death for their bad conduct. *1Co 11:29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. 1Co 11:30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. 1Co 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.*

Some sins were dealt with by delivering a person to satan. *1Co 5:5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 1Ti 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: 1Ti 1:20 Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*

I suppose that we might say that these sentences are conducted out of view of the world that may only see the consequences of the sentence in the lives of the offenders. It may also be noted that even these sentences do not mean that the offenders have lost their salvation and perhaps that is why God does not show the world what He is doing when He chastises His people.

### Man stealing

Kidnapping is one of the most serious forms of theft in the OT. The stealing of an individual's liberty, whether or not the victim was caught in your hand or not, warranted death. *Exo 21:16 And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death. Deu 24:7 If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you.*

Freedom is a basic civil right. This does not make slavery anti-scriptural or immoral. What freedom does is guard slavery from the abuse of unscrupulous men. In all the biblical disputes on slavery (see Dabney and Thornwell) who generally argue very soundly from scripture, in this instance fail to examine how the African originally entered in to that state of slavery. The Africans who were forcibly compelled to slavery showed the basis of American slavery to have been theft and the slave traders should have been executed. Had the southern theologians also complied fully with the Biblical law, the Negro would have had his freedom (if he wanted it after 7 years) possibly, but at the 50<sup>th</sup> year jubilee most certainly. It does appear that freedom is the aim of the Nation of Israel. For the world it is the opposite.

Compulsory military service may lead to an infringement of liberty as do so many state interventions. *Deu 20:5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. Deu 20:6 And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. Deu 20:7 And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. Deu 20:8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.* This shows that any citizen has rights upheld by God. There is a moral duty to aid your fellow man and in the wider sense to your Nation, but the individual is guarded within these laws so that the power of the state is limited and the power of God is established.

The state in systematically eroding the moral laws and principles of Divine Government, erode civil rights. The state by claiming the right to manipulate land and pass laws of possession, seemingly in the interest of the majority, are infringing the laws of landmark and inheritance. *Deu 19:14 Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it.*

The recycling of the land in Israel on the jubilee was the National acquiescence to the fact that “The earth is the Lords”. The working lifespan of 50 years was the turnaround time on land permanent transfer, in perpetuity was not possible. This also shows that state control was impossible.

How would we manage transport in the absence of a central ownership? In the transport field, some might see the problem of private ownership of roads as not being in the public interest or Biblical. But taking into account the overall Bible legal system why not?

1. Use would have been by toll. This is very similar to the initial system in the early 1800's where roads were constructed by private finance initiatives. Telford warned that state control would ultimately lead to using road funds for other purposes (i.e. a source of tax). He was right.
2. Failure to maintain roads would have been punishable if they caused an accident. *Deu 22:8 When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thine house, if any man fall from thence.*

I do not see that the individual possession of land is any hindrance to social progress. Removal of landmarks is theft and false witness (Calvin). It is robbing the next generation and God of his Sovereign rights.

The highest form of land mark removal is causing the blind to stumble. It is removing the just paths, perverting justice and being partial. *Deu 23:14 For the LORD thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee; therefore shall thy camp be holy:*

*that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee.* In its highest form it is adding to the word of God and subtracting from the word of God. In the OT this is practically seen in law breaking.

*Mal 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Mal 3:9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Mal 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Mal 3:11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. Mal 3:12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Tithes and heave offerings in the OT were the recognition of God as Sovereign Lord. In the NT the principle is “If you love me, you will keep my commandments”. The landmarks of the true Christian faith are the commands of CHRIST. *Psa 119:105 Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* What is the path? *Psa 23:3 He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

Any weakening in the proclamation of the Law of God, any lessening in the severity of judgements, any deliberate neglect of God’s laws and precepts is to remove the landmarks of the Gospel.

*Act 8:31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.* Philip in the NT expounds the OT to the Ethiopian as relevant and the focus was Jesus Christ. *Act 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*

Christ is the way, Christ is the standard (Nissi), the example, Christ is the centre of the Gospel. Christ is the Divine Landmark. “Look unto me and be ye saved”. Any neglect of the doctrine of Christ is one of, if not the greatest form of sin. To honour God is to honour Christ by Faith. SO that we avoid this form of theft we are bound to know Christ.

## The 7<sup>th</sup> COMMAND

*Exo 20:14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.*

### Infidelity, natural and spiritual

We come to a command that is on the surface apparently clear, yet has many complications. Seldom is advice given on what the positive aspects of this law are. The command deals primarily with sexual infidelity and ultimately with spiritual infidelity. The physical instruction will lead us to spiritual instruction. The basic role of this command is to provoke us to consider and respect relationships constituted with other people. My neighbour who has a wife, has by this command God's blessing and protection on that relationship, and it is in sense a specific attitude to stealing women (or men) as David did, *2Sa 11:4 And David sent messengers, **and took her**; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.*

Jesus takes this law to the source of failure, the human heart. *Mat 5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: Mat 5:28 But I say unto you, That **whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her** hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* This makes it clear that the law requires more than an external form or consent. It is not good enough to say "I have not in fact been to bed with my neighbour's wife", if every time she is hanging up the washing you are stripping her and fornicating with her in your head. This is perhaps even worse, as the woman is in a sense being raped in your head. In God's law "head or bed" it makes no difference.

Sexual crimes are committed by many of God's children in the scripture (e.g. Judah, David) and it is one committed for self alone, *1Co 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.* The action is sufficient to make death one of its punishments.

The 7<sup>th</sup> Command sanctifies the Lord's rights over His people. The Lord took Mary and although she was betrothed but it could never constitute a sin without impugning the righteousness of God and the sinlessness of Christ. Ultimately temporal marriage ceases when we transition to glory and then we enter the true state of marriage, union with the Lord forever. Marriage focuses on this relationship with the Lord, *Eph 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Eph 5:24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;* Adultery is forbidden as it is unfaithfulness to the husband/wife and hence to the believer's relationship with God.

Adultery presupposes that a law of 'binding' exists between two people. I cannot commit this act by taking a woman who is single (if I am single) and marrying her. I can transgress it by breaking out of the law of marriage by lust.

It is my experience that people become embarrassed when discussing the question of what constitutes a physical relationship. It is clear that God intended that Man should procreate and thereby exercise his reproductive organs. It is the act of coitus that is so often difficult to discuss or define among Christians and raises questions for them:

1. Can sexual intercourse be for pleasure as well as or apart from procreation?
2. Can petting be allowed before marriage?
3. Are there physical positions and attitudes of intercourse that are forbidden in the Bible?
4. Is contraception scriptural (see 6<sup>th</sup> Command).
5. What is perversion?

Song of Solomon was considered so sexually graphic that in ancient Israel, Jews were not allowed to read the Song until they were 30 years of age or married and even today, in Orthodox homes, it cannot be read till one has been bar or bat mitzvahed. If we are to have a healthy attitude to sexual relations governed by the Laws of God, we must go into some details. I used to think that I was a Sabbath breaker if I went out and changed a spark plug on my car on a Sunday (some would agree). I had genuine guilt but it was not a Godly guilt, it was man inflicted guilt. I was in other words conscious of offence against a section of society, rather than God. My attitude has changed. Christ has freed me and given me a wider view of “Sabbath”, my view of physical relationships has similarly developed.

Many guilty preoccupations and thus fermenting lusts may be avoided by careful study of the Word. I had little sex education (by those initiated in the matter) as a child and so for years I lived in a fantasy world. If this is your experience, what will you do to educate your children? It is a subject so difficult to open, but why? Augustine says (City of God. Ch18):

Lust requires for its consummation darkness and secrecy; and this not only when unlawful intercourse is desired, but even such fornication as the earthly city has legalized. Where there is no fear of punishment, these permitted pleasures still shrink from the public eye. Even where provision is made for this lust, secrecy also is provided; and while lust found it easy to remove the prohibitions of law, shamelessness found it impossible to lay aside the veil of retirement. For even shameless men call this shameful; and though they love the pleasure, dare not display it.

What! Does not even conjugal intercourse, sanctioned as it is by law for the propagation of children, legitimate and honourable though it be, does it not seek retirement from every eye? Before the bridegroom fondles his bride, does he not exclude the attendants, and even the paranympths, and such friends as the closest ties have admitted to the bridal chamber? The greatest master of Roman eloquence says, that all right actions wish to be set in the light, i.e., desire to be known. This right action, however, has such a desire to be known, that yet it blushes to be seen. Who does not know what passes between husband and wife that children may be born?

Is it not for this purpose that wives are married with such ceremony? And yet, when this well-understood act is gone about for the procreation of children, not even the children themselves, who may already have been born to them, are suffered to be witnesses. This right action seeks the light, in so far as it seeks to be known, but yet dreads being seen. And why so, if not because that which is by nature fitting and decent is so done as to be accompanied with a shame-begetting penalty of sin?



Is this a correct appraisal? It is true that men can only talk about sex in a brazen fashion, either by debasing it in filth or pornography, but find it difficult to speak of rationally? We may be so coldly clinical in our technical approach, so as to lose sight of the love and pleasure of the marital bed.

### The embarrassment of nudity

Let us just look at the Bible account of nudity. Of itself it was not wrong. God shows us that naked flesh in the garden was no cause for embarrassment. *Gen 2:21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; Gen 2:22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. Gen 2:23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. Gen 2:25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

They knew not what shame was. Clothing would, if necessary for the happy pair, have provided warmth alone or physical protection. It is untrue then that nudity is of itself sinful. That attitude is derived from a false approach to the fall. When they ate of the tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they were dead spiritually. In that single moment all generations to come were in the guilt of condemnation and under the wrath of God. The change was not immediately physical or chemical, it was spiritual. It was the invasion of sin through the devil's army, biting the heels of mankind. *Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: Rom 5:13 (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Rom 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. Rom 5:15 But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.*

The effect of disobedience was instantaneous. *Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. Gen 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. Gen 3:9 And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? Gen 3:10 And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. Gen 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?*

1. 'Eyes' opened (not physical eyes).
2. They made coverings.
3. They hid from God.

These acts are on the surface seemed simple particularly in terms of the impact and outcome. Obviously there is more happening than appears.

Let us consider these points.

1. They had “physical optical” and tactile knowledge of their nudity. What nakedness does this speak of? It will be shown that it is not total nudity. We do not cover our face and neck or hands when we cover nakedness, we cover our reproductive organs. They considered that they were naked in respect to a certain part of their body. It was not sexual intercourse that did this.
2. They made girdles or aprons (חגורה = chăgôrâh) related to the word for circle. *Gen 3:7 And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.* Similar to, *Isa 32:11 Tremble, ye women that are at ease; be troubled, ye careless ones: strip you, and make you bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins.* An act of contrition.

It appears then that they covered their loins. It does not appear that Eve covered her breasts and this is not implied in the text. The breasts are not reproductive. They are given as part:

- a) of the food supply to babies,
- b) as organs of sexual pleasure. *Pro 5:19 Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.* *Son 1:13 A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.*

I think that because they are reserved for the “lover” they are thus kept hidden but I do not see that scripture requires it emphatically but to avoid unnecessary stimulus to the rogue male, propriety requires it. I further say that it is the sexual or reproductive organs that are covered, which are intimately connected with covenant rite, circumcision, putting off of the flesh.

Circumcision is an outward symbol of sanctification. *Col 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.* This connects the need for a covering of the genitals with the guilt of sin. It is as if Adam and Eve buried their dead posterity under leaves, shrouded from God’s gaze and reserved in darkness. Their guilt was felt in them and their posterity. They needed this covering to hide their bodies (not from each other) but from the watching creation and God. This is clear in the Levitical laws of the priests. *Exo 20:26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.* *Exo 28:42 And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach:*

The sacrificial altar (i.e. God in redemption) could not look on their unclean posterity except in wrath. No sin goes on Israel’s altars, only pure unblemished sacrifice. God witnesses the righteousness of faith by giving them His covering, which they accept. The skinning of a dead, but living creature (perhaps a lamb?). *Gen 3:21 Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.* I look at the coverings of Genesis chapter 3 to be related to the hiding of the guilt of the posterity (of which they were fully conscious) and themselves from the gaze of God. It is the masking of sin, not simply covering sin.

Genesis chapter 9 affords another look at the antediluvian concept carried though into the new world. Commentators “shred” Noah without considering whether his act was a directive (like Rahab) from God especially in view of the prophetic consequences. However the nakedness again, the act

being deliberate, is interpreted as the act of a depraved man, but I think that he had the right to lay naked in his tent if he wanted too.

We see that in Noah's day and after the flood, the wrath of God had not removed sin or its curse. Ham does not cover his father and broadcasts his shame. Thus he shows a mockery to righteousness and invokes the curse. Ham may not acknowledge the curse of Adam as functioning but he will be shown by seeing his son cursed. Curses follow laws broken *Gen 3:14 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. Deu 27:26 Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.*

It is not nakedness or seeing a naked body which invokes the curse, it is the reviling of sin which is associated with genital exposure. The Levitical restrictions are thus clearly present in Genesis. So concerning Ham and Canaan, we see that they are called to mind again in Leviticus chapter 18, prior to the laws of incestuous relationships. *Lev 18:6 None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD.*

### Consanguinity

We have seen that the Bible gives no legislation concerning nudity, and that in the case of Adam and Eve the nakedness was realised consequent to sin. Genesis chapter 3 then typifies the requirement of a covering for unrighteousness. *Rev 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. Exo 20:26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.* (The Priests upon the altar). Fine linen is the typification of righteousness. *Rev 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*

Genesis has shown that humanity is, from the creation, morally responsible. The idea of sexual innocence and awakening in connection with the forbidden fruit may have gained currency from the confusion of nakedness mentioned in Leviticus and the association with sin. The naked couple in Eden had no guilt about their nudity until they sinned and there was no prohibition about looking at each other's nakedness. Leviticus chapter 18 is about social order. *Lev 18:6 None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the LORD.* The word for naked here is different from Genesis (ערוה = 'ervâh not עירם = 'êyrôm) in Leviticus it means to "pluck out" or to uncover in Genesis "ill clad".

The question is whether Leviticus chapter 18 is a prohibition on looking at one's relatives in the nude, or whether the words "uncover his nakedness" imply illicit sexual relations. I think people have drawn the conclusion that nakedness is sinful, by a false understanding of these verses and have carried the idea back to Eden. *Lev 18:14 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt.* We are warned not to uncover with a view to approach his wife. The meaning of 'approach' I suggest is to approach to 'gender' with. *Lev 20:16 And if a woman approach unto any beast, and lie down thereto, thou shalt kill the woman, and the beast: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.*

Likewise the general prohibition on all menstruous women (wives included). *Lev 18:19 Also thou shalt not approach unto a woman to uncover her nakedness, as long as she is put apart for her uncleanness.* In Leviticus chapter 20 we see the penalties required for the transgression of any of these degrees of consanguinity and the same group of people appear. I take it that “to uncover nakedness” in Leviticus chapter 18 is a euphemism or nice way of saying you shall not copulate with.... etc.

Covering nakedness is also the way a marriage is contracted as seen between Ruth and Boaz. Ruth the Moabitess was a widow in need of rest. *Rth 1:9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.* The widowed single status requires rest and Ruth chose to endure affliction with the people of God and Boaz recognises this. *Rth 2:11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. Rth 2:12 The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.* (See also Psalm 91).

The figure of God spreading His wings to protect His children is given, just as Christ would have done to Jerusalem, so as to grant the chicks rest from affliction. *Luk 13:34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!* Naomi seeks this refuge for Ruth. *Rth 3:1 Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?* Ruth following Naomi’s orders goes in to Boaz, she asks Boaz to spread his garment on her. *Rth 3:9 And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.*

It is literally “spread his wing over thy handmaid”, because he had the right of redemption. The parallels with the saving work of Christ are obvious. Ezekiel takes up the parable on Jerusalem. Marriage and redemption have an affinity. *Eze 16:6 And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. Eze 16:7 I have caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field, and thou hast increased and waxen great, and thou art come to excellent ornaments: thy breasts are fashioned, and thine hair is grown, whereas thou wast naked and bare. Eze 16:8 Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; **and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness:** yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.*

So we may now see that nakedness is associated with;

1. The guilt of sin.
2. The act of physical union. This second form relating to the consanguinity or “like bloods” opens up into another large field.

The following questions are posed by consanguinity:

1. Why prohibit these relations?
2. What is the Bible requirement for marriage?

3. What is incest?
4. Is polygamy scripturally acceptable?
5. How did the church, before the Exodus, understand these laws?
6. Does the NT continue these prohibitions?

Adam married his own flesh! But it was in its concept the pattern of marriage and thus was monogamous. *Mat 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, Mat 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Mat 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* Marriage is also an acknowledgement of Creation and the Creator.

Who then did Adam's sons marry? Some have suggested a parallel creation where the wives would have come from but this idea destroys the federal leadership and unity of mankind in one person Adam. This in then would render the idea of Christ as head of the new creation meaningless. As no other people existed, the sons of Adam had the choice of a wife from among their sisters.

After the flood, the options for Noah's sons (monogamous in all three cases) were their cousins or sisters and these peopled the world. *Gen 10:32 These are the families of the sons of Noah, after their generations, in their nations: and by these were the nations divided in the earth after the flood.* Leviticus does not prohibit "cousin" marriage. The parents of Jesus Christ were cousins, for Joseph had married his father's brother's daughter, Mary. Joseph himself had been born as the result of a levirate marriage; a levirate marriage is one in which a brother marries the widow of his deceased brother in order to produce children (levir being the Latin for brother-in-law).

Abraham marries his half sister (or step sister) and has a polygamous affair with the bondswoman (I do not imply here that at that period it was necessarily adulterous). One thing however is firmly before Abraham and Isaac and that is not to contract marriage with the Canaanites. *Gen 24:37 And my master made me swear, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell: Gen 28:6 When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padanaram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; Gen 28:7 And that Jacob obeyed his father and his mother, and was gone to Padanaram; Gen 28:8 And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; Gen 28:9 Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife.*

Moses father Amram takes his aunt for a wife, which is later prohibited under the law. *Exo 6:20 And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years. Lev 18:12 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman.*

Up to the time of the Levitical law I make the following observations:

1. That there are no known degrees of prohibition as to who one might marry, excepting Canaanites and married women.

2. This could imply disobedience rather than ignorance of incest, but it is strange in the face of the uprightness of the men who do it.
3. Adultery was scorned even among the Egyptians, by Abimelech King of Gerar where a death sentence is invoked. *Gen 12:18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?..... Gen 20:5 Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. Gen 20:6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her..... Gen 26:10 And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. Gen 26:11 And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death.*
4. Fornication likewise held a penalty of burning and was recognised as a sin against God and was sufficient to disinherit Reuben from his birthright. *Gen 38:24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.....Gen 39:9 There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*  
*Gen 49:4 Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel; because thou wentest up to thy father's bed; then defiledst thou it: he went up to my couch.*  
*1Ch 5:1 Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, (for he was the firstborn; but, forasmuch as he defiled his father's bed, his birthright was given unto the sons of Joseph the son of Israel: and the genealogy is not to be reckoned after the birthright.*
5. Polygamy is practiced, but it will need some careful observation before any conclusion is reached.
6. Prostitution is already “the oldest profession”.
7. The 7<sup>th</sup> Command stands today, but is open to more explanation.

### The degrees of consanguinity

Introduced in Leviticus they are as follows:

Father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, sister, stepsister, brother, stepbrother, daughter, son, granddaughter, grandson, aunt, uncle, daughter-in-law, brother-in-law , Polygamous incest.

*Lev 18:7 The nakedness of thy father, or the nakedness of thy mother, shalt thou not uncover: she is thy mother; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Lev 18:8 The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness. Lev 18:9 The nakedness of thy sister, the daughter of thy father, or daughter of thy mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover. Lev 18:10 The nakedness of thy son's daughter, or of thy daughter's daughter, even their nakedness thou shalt not uncover: for theirs is thine own nakedness. Lev 18:11 The nakedness of thy father's wife's daughter, begotten of thy father, she is thy sister, thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Lev 18:12 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's sister: she is thy father's near kinswoman. Lev 18:13 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy*

*mother's sister: for she is thy mother's near kinswoman. Lev 18:14 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy father's brother, thou shalt not approach to his wife: she is thine aunt. Lev 18:15 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy daughter in law: she is thy son's wife; thou shalt not uncover her nakedness. Lev 18:16 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness. Lev 18:17 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness.*

These laws are on our statute book with a few additions. In the Church of England prayer book, the table of kindred and affinity shows who are “forbidden in scripture and our laws to marry together”. The additions move the boundaries another step away from the parents. Section 11 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973 provides the grounds for a void marriage. A marriage will be void if it is within the list of prohibited degrees which includes relationships of consanguinity and affinity.

The New Testament suggests the continuance of such prohibitions as is seen in Corinth. It is not clear however, whether the offender took the woman in a casual relationship or whether he married her. It does bear the disapproval of the Apostle, for he contrasts the Gentiles with the man's behaviour at Corinth and shows that those who by nature have not the law are better behaved. *1Co 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.*

The law of degrees of marriage does not appear as a ceremonial law and so I suggest that as no evidence exists to the contrary it still stands. I do not find the necessity of these laws on the fact that they were going to enter the Promised Land and so endeavour by incest to keep the inheritance in the family. This was most certainly practiced in many historic dynasties and particularly among many Pharaohs who often married sister or mother. But in Israel the device was not needed because the Jubilees reverted all property back to the original families.

On a health note, rates of consanguinity are the highest in populations that are subject to the greatest burden of infectious disease mortality and many traditional human societies may have had even higher rates. Additionally, increased susceptibility to lethal infections in consanguineous individuals may have had a major impact on the selection of pathogen resistance loci<sup>11</sup>.

### The Prohibitions to Marriage

We have dealt with one group of people to whom or with whom we might not have a married relationship under the general heading of consanguinity. I am going to look further at prohibitions in order to determine what a legitimate relationship consists of.

1. The inhabitants of Canaan were forbidden, yet an Israelite might take a captive **gentile** to be his wife.

*Deu 21:10 When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the LORD thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive. Deu 21:11 And seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have*

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<sup>11</sup> <http://rsbl.royalsocietypublishing.org/content/5/4/574.full>

*her to thy wife; Deu 21:12 Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails.* This is the ceremony prescribed in cleansing her where she would in practice become a Jewess. The NT counterpart of this law is in 2Co 6:14 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?* It is a warning against a heterozygous (ἑτεροζυγέω = heterozugeō) or diverse yoke with unbelievers. The unbeliever must adopt the faith. The law of holiness is thus prefigured (see also the application to creatures and materials in *Deu 22:10 Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together*).

2. People either owned or promised to another were in a legitimate relationship. *Deu 22:23 If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her. Deu 22:24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.* To be betrothed or “be truthed” or promised constituted a marriage.

A slave girl betrothed did not invoke the same severe penalty but it was forbidden. *Lev 19:20 And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that is a bondmaid, betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her; she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free.*

Another man’s wife was forbidden. *Deu 22:22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.*

A virgin daughter being the possession of her father could not be taken in seduction without a penalty being paid to the father (this was in lieu of theft of his property). *Deu 22:28 If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found. Deu 22:29 Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.* It did constitute an act of marriage. Notice;

- a) It does not state whether the man was already married.
- b) This marriage is indissoluble in the courts of divorce. Death is the separator.

3. Bestiality. *Lev 20:15 And if a man lie with a beast, he shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast.* The creature was not a help meet. *Gen 2:20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.* From the wisdom and judgement of God in Genesis we have the prohibition. Man through bestiality would be satisfying his lusts in an unnatural way, debasing the creation. It is the corruption of nature. *Rom 1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Rom 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Corruption corrupts.*



We may also include here the prohibition of homosexual relations. *Lev 20:13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.* This is the effect of God's judicial act upon those who corrupt the truth concerning the nature of God. It is in a sense the outward form of a spiritual disease. *1Co 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.*

This issue with respect for homosexuality is not whether God loves them or whether they can be part of a church, it is how they can possibly become inheritors of God's kingdom when He says they cannot. God is homophobic<sup>12</sup>.

4. There were restrictions peculiar to the Priesthood.

a) **Priests.** *Lev 21:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people: Lev 21:7 They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God.*

b) **The High Priest.** *Lev 21:10 And he that is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and that is consecrated to put on the garments, shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes;.....Lev 21:13 And he shall take a wife in her virginity.*

It can be seen that the Priesthood was severely limited in the choice of marriage partners.

The ethnic purity of Israel was in many ways a measure of its faith. Ezra the scribe was shocked to the quick when he heard of the mixed marriages of the people. *Ezr 9:1 Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. Ezr 9:2 For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass. Ezr 9:3 And when I heard this thing, I rent my garment and my mantle, and plucked off the hair of my head and of my beard, and sat down astonished.*

The people then put these wives away (perhaps "woman" would be better as they could never have been wives under God's law, so these relationships could never have constituted a true marriage). *Ezr 10:16 And the children of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, with certain chief of the fathers, after the house of their fathers, and all of them by their names, were separated, and sat down in the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. Ezr 10:17 And they made an end with all the men that had taken strange wives by the first day of the first month.*

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<sup>12</sup> Homophobia is the hatred or fear of homosexuals - that is, lesbians and gay men - sometimes leading to acts of violence and expressions of hostility.

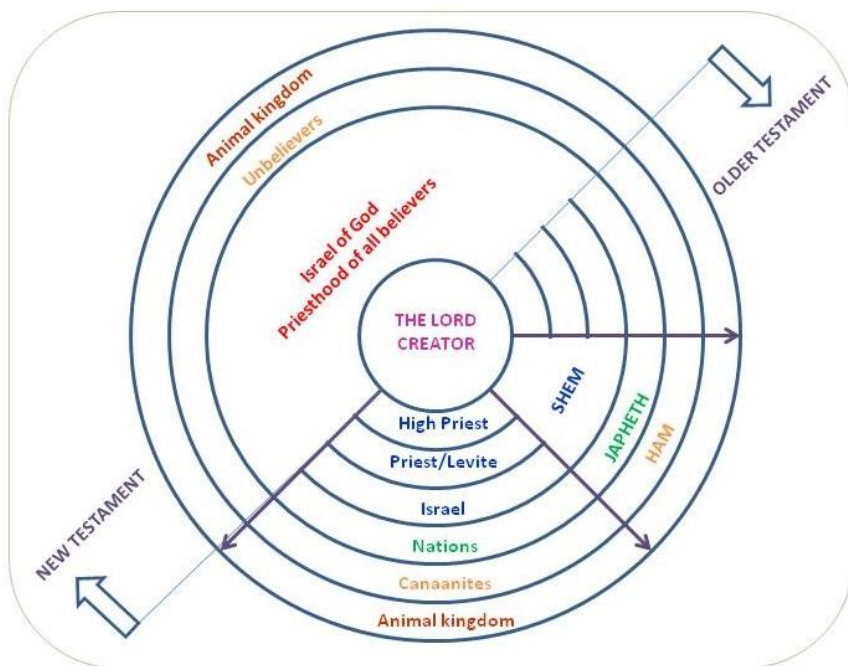
Yet it was not a complete break because later on Nehemiah finds the same problem. *Neh 13:23 In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab.*

5. Gentiles of particular tribes could not enter the congregation for so many generations, *Deu 23:2 A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD. Deu 23:3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:*

This does not preclude the entry into the blessings of fellowship, but the assimilation into the Nation of Israel and partaker of its inheritance was limited (Ruth obviously has this status).

All these prohibitions that we have discussed are concerning the outward origins of a person and we shall see later the spiritual implications. But let us now look for a common factor and see if we can deduce a law or principle for relations.

1. Mankind is separate from creation.
2. The purity of order and authority is maintained in the family unit. This guards against usurpers, i.e. a younger brother could not by a false marriage to his mother override an elder brother. Order is thus maintained in the progression of nature.
3. This I think is most important. The closer man moved to God, the more stringent the requirements for the purity of the bride. What then was permissible for the Israel Nation was not permissible for the Priesthood within it.



We might then question whether or not this is a dual standard within the law? The answer is no, because there is not an equality of persons because the priests and laity stand in a different order before God.

In summing up there are two basic questions out of which we can define a legitimate relationship.

1. Social order
  - I. Priests/Levites

- II. Israelites
- III. Nations (Gentiles)
- IV. Creatures

## 2. Degree of freedom of Individual.

- I. Freeman
- II. Bondman
- III. Betrothed
- IV. Daughter

This gives us a base for defining one aspect of an Adulterous relationship that is the physical adultery. The Hebrew word 'adultery' (נָאֵפַח = nâ'aph) is from a root means to falsify or debase and is related to a Sanskrit word meaning to "pant". Marriage embraced polygamy and there is no definite prohibition of polygamy except relating to kings, *Deu 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.* As far as we know a man could have more than one wife and satisfy the conditions we have laid out. We have not though clearly defined marriage.

The Hebrew and Greek do not make a distinction in the word for "woman" and the word for "wife". They are largely a question of exegesis where from the context will supply "wife" or "woman". *Joh 4:15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Joh 4:16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. Joh 4:17 The woman (γυνή= gunē) answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: Joh 4:18 For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. Rom 7:2 For the woman (γυνή= gunē) which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. Gen 38:14 And she put her widow's garments off from her, and covered her with a vail, and wrapped herself, and sat in an open place, which is by the way to Timnath; for she saw that Shelah was grown, and she was not given unto him to wife (אִשָּׁה נָשִׁים = 'ishshâh nâshîym = woman).*

The word we use for the woman who has gone through a particular form of promise to a man is wife. This word wife seems to have come from a sanskrit root meaning "to maintain" or "to nourish". The law of God under Moses required certain observances before a woman could cohabit with a man without invoking the penalty of the law. Physical union did not constitute a marriage, in some cases it invoked the death penalty (e.g. fornication). The observation social order was in place well before Moses gave the law.

1. Consent. *Gen 24:51 Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the LORD hath spoken. Gen 24:58 And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go.* The consent of the guardians and the bride is to be solicited.
2. Post-coital consent. In Genesis chapter 34 with Shechem and Dinah, who had already had intercourse, there was still the requirement for parental consent. *Gen 34:8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife.*

There is a lesson here that we have observed so many times before. Nobody is his own master. He or she is part of a social order which has its fountainhead in God and all men, from the slave in the dungeon to the King on the Throne are subject to higher powers. Not says the Apostle Paul because of wrath, (because of their power to inflict judgement) but also for conscience (because we are to have it set in our own hearts to obey this order). *Rom 13:5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. Rom 13:6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.*

Social order applies to

- 1) Religious matters to elders.
- 2) Civil matters with magistrates.
3. In family matters with fathers.

## Marriage

The Westminster confession of faith Chapter 24 gives the following statement on Marriage and Divorce:

Of Marriage and Divorce:

I. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.

II. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.

III. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent. Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And therefore such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies.

IV. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden by the Word. Nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife. The man may not marry any of his wife's kindred, nearer in blood then he may of his own: nor the woman of her husband's kindred, nearer in blood than of her own.

V. Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, gives just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.

VI. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God has joined together in marriage: yet, nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church, or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills, and discretion, in their own case.

I point out that the first statement above does not adequately answer the case of polygamy in the OT.

We have so far discussed the areas in which God forbids sexual relations, but we have not yet formulated “What is a marriage” what is legitimate.

The fountain head of our argument is with God in eternity. *Eph 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: Eph 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. Eph 5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. Eph 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* It portrays the essential unity of the Lord Jesus with His Church. The word to join (προσκολλάω = proskollaō) is also used of glue or solder.

Paul quotes from *Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.* The words do not come from Adam or Moses by way of explanation, but from God Himself, as the Lord Jesus says in *Mat 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, Mat 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?*

There is a “leaving” and a “cleaving” required and this forbids all casual relationships and the glue is supposed to last a lifetime. Adam was thus joined before he “knew” his wife. The euphemism “knew” implies a state of ignorance on the part of a man, not of his sexual behaviour, but of his own experience.

Paul says that he desires to present the saints “as a chaste virgin to Christ”. *2Co 11:2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* Virginity is a sign of personal faithfulness. For the first husband this is a biblical requirement and it also puts responsibility on the parent or guardian to encourage this state.

The breaking of the hymen on the night of consummation revealed what the groom had hoped for. That he had taken a pure bride. The “tokens” the cloth taken with the stain of blood was the proof in law of faithfulness, Man enters a woman, not without blood!. *Deu 22:15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate.*

Sexual incontinence today is spreading the sexually transmitted diseases at an alarming rate. Reported cases of three nationally notifiable STDs in the United States, Chlamydia, gonorrhoea, and

syphilis, have increased for the first time since 2006, according to data published by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the 2014 STD Surveillance Report.

The approximately 1.4 million reported cases of Chlamydia, a rate of 456.1 cases per 100,000 population, is up 2.8 percent since 2013. Rates of primary and secondary (P&S) syphilis, the most infectious stages of syphilis and gonorrhoea have both increased since 2013, by 15.1 percent and 5.1 percent, respectively. In 2014, there were 350,062 reported cases of gonorrhoea (a rate of 110.7 per 100,000) and 19,999 reported cases of P&S syphilis (for a rate of 6.3 per 100,000). STDs continue to affect young people, particularly women, most severely, but increasing rates among men contributed to the overall increases in 2014 across all three diseases.

In the UK information technology also plays its part. Dating apps (application software) are potentially dangerous to users' sexual health. According to a specialist Dr Peter Greenhouse, "If enough people change partners quickly, and they've got other untreated sexually transmitted infections, it might just start an explosion of HIV in the heterosexual population. Apps could do that." London's Dean Street NHS sexual health centre, which runs one of the UK's only app support clinics, says it's regularly supporting dozens of patients a month. The latest figures from Public Health England suggest rapid rises in some STIs. Syphilis has seen a 33% increase and gonorrhoea a 19% increase in 2014.

Infidelity brings its own judgements even in the flesh.

#### Arranged marriages

This may be undertaken by the father (as with Jacob of his daughter Dinah). *Gen 34:8 And Hamor communed with them, saying, The soul of my son Shechem longeth for your daughter: I pray you give her him to wife.* Abraham also arranges a wife for a son. *Gen 24:4 But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac.* Judah with Er and Onan. *Gen 38:6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name was Tamar. Gen 38:7 And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him. Gen 38:8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.* It may also be a near kinsman who had the right of "levirate" as in the book of Ruth. The daughter likewise might be given into marriage. *Exo 21:7 And if a man sell his daughter to be a maidservant, she shall not go out as the menservants do. Exo 21:8 If she please not her master, who hath betrothed her to himself, then shall he let her be redeemed: to sell her unto a strange nation he shall have no power, seeing he hath dealt deceitfully with her.*

Should Christians arrange marriages? I have received much advice on marriage over the years and some before I was married. One piece of early advice was "look at her mother". The reason was that in all probability, your wife would turn into her mother. Another rather cynical piece of advice was "when you meet your future wife you feel you could eat her, six months after marriage you will wish you had". Both pieces of advice however badly put carry some truths, namely that the choices you make have consequences. Perhaps allowing wiser and more experienced people to assist your choices will make for a better outcome in the future.

Many relationships are likely to be based on external factors when you are young (looks, style, taste in the world's music etc.), things that turn out to be trivial later, things which change and are far less of value as you age. Getting a wise head involved at the start can save much sorrow later. The idea that marriages might be made in heaven would of necessity require heavenly, godly advice to make that true.

#### The state does not control marriage

State consent is not required, it is only the legal guardians. Hodge rightly recognises marriage as neither civil or ecclesiastical in origin (Systematic Theology Vol 3 Page 377).

Marriage is not a sacrament in the sense in which baptism and the Lord's Supper are sacraments, nor in the sense of the Romish Church; but it is none the less a sacred institution. Its solemnization is an office of religion. It should, therefore, be entered upon with due solemnity and in the fear of God; and should be celebrated, i.e., the ceremony should be performed by a minister of Christ. He alone is authorized to see to it that the law of God is adhered to; and he alone can receive and register the marriage vows as made to God. The civil magistrate can only witness it as a civil contract, and it is consequently to ignore its religious character and sanction to have it celebrated by a civil officer. As the essence of the marriage contract is the mutual compact of the parties in the sight of God and in the presence of witnesses, it is not absolutely necessary that it should be celebrated by a minister of religion or even by a civil magistrate. It may be lawfully solemnized, as among the Quakers, without the intervention of either. Nevertheless as it is of the greatest importance that the religious nature of the institution should be kept in view, it is incumbent on Christians, so far as they themselves are concerned, to insist that it should be solemnized as a religious service.

Yet he expands a little further on the arrangement as something the "state has the right to enforce" (page 378).

It is so implicated in the social and civil relations of men that it of necessity comes under the cognizance of the state. It is therefore a civil institution. (1.) In so far as it is, and must be, recognized and enforced by the state. (2.) It imposes civil obligations which the state has the right to enforce. The husband is bound to sustain his wife, for example, and he is constrained by the civil law to the performance of this duty. (3.) Marriage also involves, on both sides, rights to property; and the claims of children born in wedlock to the property of their parents. All these questions concerning property fall legitimately under the control of the civil law.

Hodge contradicts himself. It does not belong to an ecclesiastical hierarchy or the state. It is a family institution. It involves mothers and fathers, sons and daughters. It was created before men became ministers of religion and ministers of state. Marriage is before God only and through the mediator Jesus Christ. What God joins together cannot be touched by the state, neither can the state force people together or apart. *Mat 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*

The people have called the rulers of this world 'god' like Herod. *Act 12:22 And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.* They claim the right to say when a man is and isn't married. "I pronounce that they be man and wife together". Can man turn water into wine?

The Quakers recognised that the state had no say, and that the assembly minister was not essential. (Page 398 Fox Journal abridged version). The Quaker arrangement is now similar to what is called the "common law" marriage. The term is a legal one and is not equated with "cohabitation". While state registration of marriage is not a Christian requirement, there are pecuniary advantages. The woman of such a "common law" relationship is in law called a wife. In such a relationship the woman has certain rights.

1. Custodianship of the children.
2. Has the right to maintenance payments.
3. Can share a joint tenancy to secure property rights.
4. Entitled to family incomes supplement.
5. Also to supplementary benefit if deserted.

The state (at the time of writing this 1980's) did not give the common law wife;

1. Rights to property without a will.
2. Though children can inherit from the father.
3. They have single tax status although one can claim a child's tax allowance.
4. No widows benefit.
5. No rights to maintenance on her own account (taken from CANS bulletin Dec 1974) .

There are some pecuniary and legal advantages then to be gained by state registry of marriage. But note it is NOT required by Law or by God. Christians will need to be bold to depart from the traditional system of marriage but we should do so to establish again the foundation of marriage that it is before God. We with Peter should hearken to God not man.

My advice would be to register the arrangement under the state laws if you want to gain its advantages. Before that, consecrate the arrangement with the parties concerned before witnesses. Registration may be done as in the case of Jewish marriages by "giving notice to the superintendent of Registrars..." after which the marriage may take place in a Synagogue or house. It is a process of simplification and education.

Marriage outside of Christ is meaningless.

### Betrothal

Betrothal was practiced and serves to encourage fidelity, solemnity and good intent. It is what some call "getting engaged". It is the situation that regards the woman as a wife without conjugal privileges. *Deu 22:23 If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Deu 22:24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.* It was not essential, but was encouraged.



### Witnesses of marriage

Documentary proof was required for divorce as it was for the marriage. *Deu 22:13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, Deu 22:14 And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: Deu 22:15 Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate:* Divorce required a testimony also, *Deu 24:1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.*

It is a bit like a pre- post-nuptial agreement, a testimony of intent drawn up between consenting parties to avoid any claims of infidelity etc.

### Summary of marriage

From the Biblical evidences, a marriage is

1. The construction of a new family unit by consent of the parents. (I presume godliness will require consent of the children). To make it legitimate in God's eyes the person must not be married already, must have guardians consent (a parent has property in their offspring) and testify their intent of faithfulness.
2. The bounds of consanguinity are not to be broached. This gives us the result that in the extreme case of two people (man and woman) without previous attachment, may on a desert island for example, in the absence of any other authority, have before God a marriage status without the consent of the state.
3. Marriage satisfies God's laws of social order and moral suitability.
4. I was going to bring up the peculiar case of Nuns some of whom are encouraged to think they are to be a bride of Christ. May I say that anyone who is a blood bought child of God is already joined to Christ. He has a pledge of intent by the giving of the Holy Ghost. This is virtually what fellowship in the church is – a union and communion with one another and each with Christ. This perfect union takes us through the Cross and grave as Paul shows. *Rom 6:5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* We are identified with Him. The peculiar case of self imposed celibacy by Nuns is a divergence of true religion that we have already covered. The cloistered existence is contrary to what God has revealed and although perhaps in ignorance – it bypasses God to achieve holiness.
5. Sexual abstinence is not productive of Holiness as the Scholastics thought. *Heb 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.* Sex with your spouse does not make it unholy! It keeps you holy!! Luther originally equated chastity with holiness. Marriage changed him. Luther originally saw marriage as a physical affair and afterwards saw its benefits as primarily spiritual.
6. The kingdom eunuch is God given. It requires not his separation into a cloister. He is kept by the power of God. It rests with God as a gift to the man, not as a man assumed decree.

## Divorce

*Mat 19:3 The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, **Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?** Mat 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, Mat 19:5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Mat 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. Mat 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? Mat 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses **because of the hardness of your hearts** suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. Mat 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. Mat 19:10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. Mat 19:11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. Mat 19:12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.*

The question is not so much what Moses had written, but what was the scope of Moses writings? What did the law of divorce cover in terms of causes for divorce? In Matthew it was it was the question “Is it really lawful for a man to put his wife away for EVERY cause?” It demands a fuller answer and it gets it. I trust at this point the harmony of Christ’s teachings are seen. It serves us a great lesson not to use texts at random without seeing the context and argument. One swallow doesn’t make a summer; likewise a scriptural truth does not always give a whole doctrinal statement. This is important particularly to biblical method. *Deu 24:1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.* Divorce is such as case.

I am quite sure that the mind, set on separation, would have been able to conjure up any number of reasons for the women to lose favour. To the Pharisee this one scripture in Deuteronomy meant everything he wanted it to. He loved it for his own sake, not for the sake of righteousness. It was a great escape clause to marriage. *Mal 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.* Had the Pharisee considered previous revelation i.e. Genesis and Deuteronomy 21:1, his interpretation would have seemed contradictory? He would have asked “Why does God who made it so secure in the beginning allow us freedom to break the relationship?” God hasn’t changed. Ah, no, but we have! To us in the NT it is a principle of interpretation. The creation ordinance (marriage) is a higher form of law the mosaic precept. The lesser law bows to the greater. The laws of Deuteronomy chapter 22 should cause us to think.

Perhaps Matthew chapter 19 is the most explicit statement from our Lord’s lips. Our Lord goes back in time before Deuteronomy 22 and 24, back into Genesis chapter 2. The simple answer to the question “Is it lawful for a man to.....” is no, because “Let not man put asunder” makes it God’s responsibility not men. The Lord Jesus does not feed them answers immediately, He draws their

minds. Teaching is the involvement of another mind with a particular truth. Resolve your question and you may see an answer more clearly. This is a lesson on pastoral ministry.

The Pharisees go on to the question that they really wanted answered. “Why did Moses give this to us?” It was of course because they were hard hearted and unforgiving. In the Kingdom we have not got stony hearts, we have hearts of flesh, we should not behave as Pharisees. The single exception for divorce is “except for fornication”. It must also appear that illicit sex with any woman is fornication and with marriages particularly adultery.

It may be an inference in this statement that monogamy now rules. The disciples see the more exact discipline and view marriage with a far more sober mind. Marriage is obviously not a game for two people so better not to plan for it than to fail?

Going to another woman who is not your wife is to join your flesh to hers. *1Co 6:16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.* It is particularly grievous as a sin against one’s own body. Obviously all sin is an internal disposition, but here it is a defiling of the flesh.

### Separation

*1Co 7:15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.* This is the final passage I shall consider here. It deals with a marriage in which as partner is converted and the other an unbeliever who leaves. The question is does this ‘leaving’ unbind the marriage?

It would not conflict with Jesus’ teaching as he is not dealing with divorce for desertion, but divorce for adultery. John Murray (Divorce) goes into a very good discussion to which I refer those interested. To me, it presents a practical problem and I offer the following comments. The Elders of the church should ascertain why the split has occurred. It may be the believer’s fault. Believers are not always right! I have formed an opinion over the years that separation is the result of two people not working on their marriage. It may also be a consequence of an unequal yoke that finally breaks. Reconciliation must be encouraged. If the believer cannot induce reconciliation, then remain single until such times as clear grounds of adultery may arise.

However, marriage does give release to incontinency and a partner denied rights might well sin! If the unbeliever has departed, he has rejected his wife’s conjugal rights, her physical support and his position as head of the family. This may well be further grounds. Let each be satisfied. I cannot fall one way or the other here.

I have concluded over the years that there are two primary issues that will lead to a stable marriage.

1. That both parties are committed Christians
2. That any problems will be solved biblically.

If we act out those, then we will avoid most if not all of the pitfalls.

## Fornication

The Lord shows the main reason for a split to be fornication. *Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.* This is grounds, but does not imply that they should be used. Forgiveness can be exercised here as with any other sin, but should it be? We should ask, if God has truly forgiven me all of my sin and does so still, how can I not forgive another's sin?

## Is divorce inevitable?

The rules relating to marriage seldom cause the same theological excitement as this topic of divorce. I have noticed that many people lose the joy of marriage with time. Because people have not worked on their marriage, they drift apart. The joys of marriage have now faded, the initial happiness has given way to selfishness and perhaps hatred, the desire of at least one of the parties moves to dissolve the relationship. Although there are many factors to be considered, divorce is increasing in those people over 60 in the UK.

May I assert here, that as with marriage, the divorce is not in the power of a magistrate or minister, but in the councils of God. We can therefore only regard the relationship as terminated when the scriptural procedure has been obeyed. *Mat 19:6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* This is the reason that remarriage may be an adulterous relationship, because the divorce is not recognised as valid by God.

Let us go back first to the Pentateuch. Monogamy we agree was the principle in marriage. The woman says Paul in Roman's 7, "is bound to the law of her husband as long as he lives". Whilst we may read between the lines of Genesis, the clear distinctions between human relations are defined in the law. To understand divorce we must obviously see what constitutes a legitimate relationship. This we saw in Leviticus 18 and 20 (Lev 17 for the Priests).

The passage dealing with divorce is, *Deu 24:1 When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. Deu 24:2 And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. Deu 24:3 And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Deu 24:4 Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*

The unseemly thing was "ill defined" and gave rise to the section "gittin" (Bills of Divorce in the Mishnah, GIT 6.6 P315 Danby). It was openly abused, yet it did carry with it a penalty, the woman when put out could not remarry her first husband after contracting another marriage. Two exceptions were:

1. The case of the man who made a false charge against his wife *Deu 22:13 If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her.*

2. The man who committed fornication. *Deu 22:28 If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found. Deuteronomy chapter 24 did not apply.*

It is obvious that Deuteronomy chapter 24 gave a lot of scope to institute a divorce, just why we shall see, but we must first consider further evidence on the subject. Note that what we call the four Gospels is also an OT comment on marriage. The OT and the law are firmly in place until Jesus dies on the Cross, so Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are for the most part Older Testament writings.

1. *Luk 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.* At first sight it appears to say that to remarry after a divorce is to commit adultery. Let us observe the context. a) The Lord has been teaching on marriage and divorce. b) It appears as the final summary of a doctrinal statement. c) The Lord has been teaching a mixed gathering on “the lost sheep” and “the prodigal son”. The prodigal was a lost sheep. He repented of his sin. *Luk 15:18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee.* Naturally to counter the thought “what may we sin that grace may abound”. The Lord follows on with the steward.

It is a difficult parable, but basically deals with faithfulness. One can be faithful with Mammon without serving it. *Luk 16:14 And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.* They think that this is a joke because they were covetous, but they mock the law, because God does not see with their eyes or esteem their values. The law stands, faithfulness is commanded. How better to sum up the two in a practical way. *Luk 16:18 Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.*

2. *Mat 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.* Here the law is being confirmed and interpreted with the Kingdom in mind. Whatever else it might teach, Luke chapter 16 verse 18 showed that adultery was still against the laws of the kingdom. It was not to be considered a proof text for divorce and it does not contradict Matthew. There is an exception that Luke omits. Fornication. The Lord here is making a more precise remark against the abuses of religious men.
3. *Mar 10:2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. Mar 10:3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? Mar 10:4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. Mar 10:5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. Mar 10:6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. Mar 10:7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; Mar 10:8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. Mar 10:9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put*

*asunder. Mar 10:10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. Mar 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. Mar 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.*

It is again like Luke chapter 16, a rebuke to the Pharisees. Perhaps the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount had permeated their religion? This supposition would make the question less abrupt. The “letter” of Moses seemed to allow divorce freely, Jesus did not. The question is really directed at Christ’s authority.

“Moses or you, who do we believe? If we believe Moses we cannot accept you?” This makes it easier to see why the Lord Jesus does not bring in the “excepting for” clause. The Lord Jesus in his answer merely shows that Moses was to be believed, but it was for a particular reason, men had hard hearts and because of this, the precept entered. It wasn’t always so, God had made man to be one flesh and God had not given man the right of dissolution. The Lord is not out to show here the nature of causes for divorce, but purely the harmony of Moses with the ‘Edenic’ and Kingdom law. Coming aside to the disciples He expands on the error of the Pharisees.

The phrase in verse 11, “commits adultery against” is difficult. Against who? The first wife, or the new second wife? Lange is I think right when he says “adultery against the first woman is consummated by marriage with the second. And thus the second marriage is made into adultery”. (Lange on Mark. 1866). A similar confrontation with the Pharisees occurs in the next passage (Luke 17).

#### Punishments.

In the Bible forgiveness is always on the condition of justice satisfied. In terms of our salvation “Christ died for our sins”. And if justice is to be satisfied there must follow penalties. *Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:* Christ then pays the price, or penalty for our sin. The wages of sin being death. So we are forgiven, justice is satisfied, the penalty paid.

There are however penalties upon man. By that I mean to satisfy justice amongst men themselves, even as there is Divine justice to be settled between God and man. We may view the temporal justice as a shadow of the absolute and eternal justice of God or to use another expression to forshadow the righteousness of God.

As we have pointed out, the Divine reconciliation and the temporal reconciliation are coincident. *Lev 6:5 Or all that about which he hath sworn falsely; he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth, in the day of his trespass offering. Mat 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Mat 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. Mat 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: Mat 6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your*

*trespasses*. This of course presents the nexus of the Christian dilemma concerning law and punishment.

If I go about just verbally forgiving, letting things go without bringing them to condemnation, I cannot make any representation to justice. If I further urge the world to verbal forgiving there will be no penal system at all. We might let our imagination run and see a court of forgiveness, where thieves are let out forgiven, murders are sent on their way by the smiling victim's relatives, guns and knives loaded and sharpened by the door, to assist these forgiven criminals on their way.

Let us pause to consider just what did Jesus mean when He said, *Luk 23:34 ..... Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*. Does that mean the wicked men were eternally forgiven of all their sins? I think not as there was no repentance. Does it mean that ignorance is an excuse to avoid punishment because we did not know the significance of the deed? I think not. Ignorance is no excuse under law. What I do believe is that it is a window into the heart of our Lord and we see that in Him was no malice to His murderers. They would still have to stand before His Father and account for their actions on the day of Judgement.

It needs little imagination to further see that if a man can escape penalties for crime he will have a lucrative business at the expense of the forgiving population. To some extent we owe this narrow view to the concept of love and forgiveness as a prime Christian virtue, but it is defined by man not God. Attributes of God that we can copy but let us just briefly again remind ourselves of the principle elements of love and forgiveness.

Love says Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 is "the better way" not "another way" and is not at the expense of the gifts. It is a "way of excellence". It is not as some would have it taught, "you don't need gifts only love" and the next advance of such false logic, "you don't need doctrine only love". The factious but highly gifted Corinthians show us that their gifts in no way automatically edify, thus the drift of chapters 12, 13 and 14 move towards the "building up in love" and order in the church.

Love is the grace that adds body and life to the gifts of Christ. Tongues are transformed from "clanging cymbals" to edifying and meaningful sounds. Faith that could not shift a mountain is made from nothing, to something of great benefit. Love is in some ways a restraint on the selfishness of the saint. *1Co 13:4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 1Co 13:5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.*

Love shares with the conscience the preference for truth. *1Co 13:6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; 1Co 13:7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

The primary direction of love is to God, then man. It is the epitome of obedience and the summary of law. (If you love me....). *Rom 13:10 Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.* I conclude that love must have a respect for the law, and lawlessness cannot be called love. What men call love today is an indulgence of selfish flesh. If we tell them the truth they will run

a mile, if we love them we can catch them! No, if we tell the truth in love we rest in God for the consequence.

As we said earlier, justice is required for forgiveness. It says in *Eph 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace*. I must then, while forgiving, encourage the principle of justice (i.e. restitution) in the guilty person. I do this to encourage the souls to repentance and restrain the sinful disposition of man. The power of inflicting penalties rests with the magistrate (civil power) *Rom 13:3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same*. The assembly must as God's representative, encourage justice through the obedience to Christ.

The Law of Moses was a complete and perfect system of temporal legislation for a nation, encouraging the protection of the weak, temporal prosperity and the advance of morality which acted as a schoolmaster to Christ. As a Christian I do not seek justice as revenge or punishment for self satisfaction (as calling down fire, "you know not what spirit you are"), but out of a sense of love and duty to the rest of humanity who accept God's law.

Too much today we have the criminal in focus. We are to love him and protect him? Let us look though at the remainder of the nation, the many as opposed to we few. Do we not owe them some protection, and will we not show our love for them by a practical manifestation of justice?

We may well rewrite "the good Samaritan" for today's Christianity. While the man was left to bleed to death, the state would be hunting for the robbers to put them in a nice warm rehabilitation centre, for a time with a lawyer paid for by the victim. Dare we mention that the wounded victim and his relatives would pay the bill to keep him in comfortable confinement<sup>13</sup>.

In the 8<sup>th</sup> Command we saw that an individual had it within his power to make restitution. Can this be done with the 7<sup>th</sup> Command?

John Murray (p211 Collected writings, Vol 1) on the Sabbath Institution says "There were regulations in connection with other commandments which we have no warrant to believe apply to us under the NT" and cites *Exo 21:17 And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death*. For parents and *Lev 20:10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death*. The death of adulterers and their provisions were closely bound up with an economy that has passed away.

The Westminster Confession (Chapter 19) makes similar murmurings:

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<sup>13</sup> OSLO, April 20 2016 (Reuters) - Norwegian mass killer Anders Behring Breivik partly won a court case against the Norwegian state, in which he said he was the victim of human rights abuses in prison, a Norwegian court ruled on Wednesday. The court also ordered the government to pay legal costs of 331,000 kroner (\$40,600) for the right-wing extremist, who killed 77 people in a shooting rampage and bombing attack in 2011



III. Besides this law, commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel, as a church under age, ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, His graces, actions, sufferings, and benefits; and partly, holding forth divers instructions of moral duties. All which ceremonial laws are now abrogated, under the New Testament.

IV. To them also, as a body politic, He gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the State of that people; not obliging under any now, further than the general equity thereof may require.

However if we “have no warrant to believe” we must see what evidence we can hang our case upon. I confess in the NT that I see no evidence for the cessation of certain laws and punishments. There were obvious penalties for the 7<sup>th</sup> Command outside of the Mosaic law, and before it. *Gen 38:24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. Gen 38:25 When she was brought forth, she sent to her father in law, saying, By the man, whose these are, am I with child: and she said, Discern, I pray thee, whose are these, the signet, and bracelets, and staff. Gen 38:26 And Judah acknowledged them, and said, She hath been more righteous than I; because that I gave her not to Shelah my son. And he knew her again no more.*

Penalties existed before the institution of the Law of Moses to the nation of Israel. If the sequence of Genesis 6 is significant the intermarrying of the sons of God with the daughters of men was a signal for impending judgement. *Gen 6:1 And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, Gen 6:2 That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. Gen 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.*

The statement by Murray that “we do not believe that the sanction by which they were punished under the Mosaic law is applicable under the New Testament”, misses the whole point about where we as believers are established. We are citizens of a heavenly, a spiritual Kingdom no longer on earth. Our King Himself executes the punishments for breaking the law. The adulterer has an eternal death sentence and has no place in the Kingdom. The King also exercises the power to inflict sickness and death to those who abuse the rules of the Kingdom (1 Corinthians chapter 11). The laws apply under the NT but they are administered differently

There are in the law certain penalties that followed the infringement of a ceremonial law (Sabbath breaking as an example) as well as the civil laws. Where the law is not ceremonial, we see at least commands number 5 and 10 are still in order. *Rom 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. Rom 13:9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* Do we not then have the same punishments? We do but it is under a different administration.

I do not see the church has the right to inflict temporal judgements and punishments. To the best of her ability she discerns the outward conformity of her members to Christ. Excommunication or deliverance to satan is her highest power. This does not mean that the miscreant should escape the magistrate. The two spheres of Civil and Ecclesiastical governance run together as separate, but both under God. One deals with the flesh, the other with the spirit.

My consideration is “that the Almighty is not bound to implement his laws immediately in the realm of man, not being under them”, and while God gives men penalties to outwork among themselves, this does not put Him under that same obligation. From God’s viewpoint the Law is mutable, He not being subject to it. The same may be said to apply to natural realms, Christ may walk on water, suspend the laws of gravity and extend the power to others but that is a prerogative of the Creator. It is a privilege of God to dispense with certain laws on behalf of other laws for His own purpose.

A paradox might illustrate the point. Can God make an object so large that He could not move it? Creative and dynamic omnipotence! If the answer is yes, then He is dynamically incapable. If the answer is no, then He is creatively incapable. However, the point is that we cannot place God under the conditions to do this work? The question melts away if God cannot be subjected to task.

This may bring us to an understanding as to why Jesus did not invoke the death penalty on the woman taken in adultery John chapter 8 (where was the man who somehow escaped the condemnation of the woman?).

*Deu 22:22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then **they shall both of them die**, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. Deu 22:23 If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Deu 22:24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and **ye shall stone them with stones that they die**; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.* This case law implies that both parties are guilty except in the case of rape. This then could present a case of a woman raping a man, to make only the woman guilty.<sup>14</sup> However, it is called adultery and removes this objection.

The scribes and Pharisees wanted to make an accusation against Jesus. *Joh 8:6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.* This shows us just how blameless the Lord walked. They could not catch Him in His deeds, perhaps His words might give the evidence?

They have already let one person of the act of adultery escape (the man committing adultery), now they make the law a matter of private judgement. Did Jesus have the civil position to confer judgement? They admit, by offering the chance to pronounce sentence, that they invalidate their own Sanhedrin as the governing body.

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<sup>14</sup> This is happening in Zimbabwe. February 25, 2016. International Business Times.

It is clear that though that the Pharisees are exploiting sin so that they could “catch Jesus”. Would they really have stoned the woman despite Jesus’ judgement or would they have let her go? The actions of Christ in writing in the dust are open to speculation. In Numbers 5 there are some parallels with the jealousy offering. Here the Lord writes on the earth itself.

Now it might appear that Jesus is defending sin in the woman. *Joh 8:7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. “Go on do it if your heart is right”.* For Jesus to have denied this action would have contradicted the Law of Moses. This He does not do. He first deals with the sin of the rulers and then that of the woman. Christ therefore neither abrogates nor repeals Moses law, but sets out the requirements for the judges.

Being reproved by their conscience they go out. *Joh 8:9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.* The conscience was sprung by Christ’s application of the law. Turning to the woman, the Lord says, “I do not condemn you – sin no more”. There are no witnesses for the law to function. If the woman is unrepentant, she will meet the higher tribunal of God in His good time. God is not bound to go out and stone her on the steps of the temple.

In 2 Samuel chapter 12 there is the distressing story of a saint who knowing the blessings of Jehovah continues to steal a man’s wife, to kill her husband by devious means and hope to escape judgement. The world might say, how could he be a Christian and do that? It would appear to be answered by the fact that regeneration and growth require knowledge. *Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.* The principle of godliness may be in a man, yet have limited exercise by virtue of limited knowledge. I am not making excuses for sin, sinners or sinning. I am trying to reconcile the observable antithesis of a new creature with the Divine revelation. Being in Christ does not make a man sinless with regard to outworking of life. The law of sin still works.

The Lord recognises that David, despite the despicable action has the intent to take Bathsheba for a wife and desires the child. David must also pay. *2Sa 12:10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. 2Sa 12:16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.*

They are responsible actions, but they have been achieved at the price of much suffering. The trail of damaged lives goes beyond them and yet the hurricane is not blown out. *2Sa 12:14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.* Unfortunately the child becomes a victim of David and Bathsheba’s sin.

Often God’s threats are conditional as with Ninevah, and David prays for mercy despite the pronouncement of doom upon the child. Sin certainly does not prevent prayer, it encourages it. (See Daniel 9). It gives body to it by showing it direction.

Here is another case with no human witnesses. Nathan appears to get the knowledge by direct revelation. *2Sa 12:1 And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.* Nathan recounts a story to bring David to his own conviction of sin. The Lord does not kill David and let the child live to perpetuate the line of Christ. He, the Lord has further purposes for David, yet in that wisdom He deals judgement, so as to warn men that He does not condone their errors. The child must die, a deliberate act of God. The Lord does take children and not always because of their original sin, but by virtue of a settled providence and at times to reprove the parents. Children are God's gift, they may be as easily withdrawn.

God therefore instead of bringing an immediate judgement on the repentant David, extends His Almighty hand to sweep many others before His judgement seat, to publicly witness that God is not mocked, not subject to man's ways and firmly behind the moral ordinances. It shows the greater machinery of the "Determinate Council". Man often copies God in showing a mercy, without the greater understanding of law and righteousness. We have previously seen the danger of imposing a limitation on God, i.e. that He must obey the moral laws. No, He is the Potter and we are the clay.

An aspect of the final judgement is that man will endeavour to hide from God by being stoned in the earth. *Rev 6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; Rev 6:16 And said to the mountains and rocks, **Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:** Rev 6:17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?*

God however will not let them escape. The hearts of men are ever before Him and His gaze. *Joh 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, **Lord, thou knowest all things;** thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

And it is this heart that is the root of most of Adultery. *Mat 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* We may correct the external act, but the motivation is changed by God alone. As with Abimelech *Gen 20:6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for **I also withheld thee from sinning against me:** therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.* His integrity was empowered by God.

The highest and most heinous form of this crime of adultery must reside in the attitude to God. In Jeremiah's day the nation of Judah was adulterous. *Jer 9:2 Oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging place of wayfaring men; that I might leave my people, and go from them! for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men.* Against the historical background of religious treachery the faithful prophet denounces infidelity. So great had it become that even the greatest intercessors of the OT, Moses and Samuel would not have turned God's wrath away. *Jer 15:1 Then said the LORD unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.*

As James observes, *Jas 4:4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.* The attitudes of the world are inconsistent with the attitudes of God's Kingdom.

Here is a present warning to "Christianity". Spiritual adultery will be punished because it consists in unfaithfulness to God. Yet even here in this life we may be shown mercy and forgiveness, not only for physical but spiritual adultery. In the world to come we shall be sealed forever in righteousness or judgement. This is why every Christian professor must examine his position lest he please man and offend God. Doctrine is essential to this end.

Jeremiah offended the men of his day and they would have killed him. *Jer 26:13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you. Jer 26:14 As for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as seemeth good and meet unto you. Jer 26:15 But know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon the inhabitants thereof: for of a truth the LORD hath sent me unto you to speak all these words in your ears.*

He did not care. He was Faithful unto death in the midst of "*an evil and adulterous generation amongst whom you shine as lights in the world*".

## The 6<sup>th</sup> COMMAND

*Exo 20:13 Thou shalt not kill.*

### The scope of the command

You will see from the list of OT capital offences that there are two groups divided by their reference to Civil or Ecclesiastical penalties. There is a further group which is not so clearly related to either.

It must also be apparent on reflection, that the words "Thou shalt not kill" is not an absolute prohibition and requires definition given by God because there are, under the OT, at least 40 "thou shalt kills". For example, *Exo 21:15 And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death.* The Hebrew for kill (רצח = râtsach) means to break or crush, pierce or stab. The English word murder comes from the from Old English morðor meaning "secret killing of a person, unlawful killing." The sixth Command should be more clearly read as "Thou shalt not murder" or better, "thou shalt not kill unlawfully".

Again, this commandment can only make sense when we have examined the case law because the command has reference to taking life in a lawless fashion, in the absence of justice, righteousness and truth. The command defines the legal boundaries of life and living with your neighbour and at what stage you forfeit the right to continue in this world.

When we looked at the other commands it became clear that the laws are protective of individuals within its framework. It is a Divine fence about the flock of God. In this context Jesus continues to define the right of entry and exit to life. *Joh 10:9 I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.* We can see how the word for pasture (βομή = nome) is related to the word for law (νόμος = nomos)<sup>15</sup> as that which is assigned by God for their sustenance.

The benefit of the law was in its right use as Paul says, good. *1Ti 1:8 But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully.* An individual by entering into the covenant agreed to abide by the ten law words. *Deu 4:1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. Deu 4:2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. Deu 4:3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baalpeor: for all the men that followed Baalpeor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you.*

There is often confusion here and it is that sacrifice was the basis of maintaining the covenant. The Jews themselves fell into this error of having a form of ritualistic worship, but denying the power. The Prophets very quickly pointed out the error. They said that obedience to God what was needed, to hearken rather than sacrifice. Samuel said it. *1Sa 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.* And from him in Hosea the cry is taken up - *Hos 6:6 For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.* And it is Jeremiah who in the spirit records clearly God's way of peace as not based in killing, but in hearing.

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<sup>15</sup> From a primary word νέμω nemō (to parcel out, especially food or grazing to animals); law (through the idea of prescriptive usage), generally (regulation), specifically (of Moses [including the volume]; also of the Gospel), or figuratively (a principle): - law.

*Jer 7:21 Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh. Jer 7:22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: Jer 7:23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you. Jer 7:24 But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their evil heart, and went backward, and not forward. Jer 7:25 Since the day that your fathers came forth out of the land of Egypt unto this day I have even sent unto you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them.*

NT “Christianity” has followed a similar path. It considers its outward displays of so called worship a fitting mark of its relationship with God. Its “bells and smells”, its special ceremonies, its ritual sprinklings, its choruses and its songs, its robes and its titles substitute for the moral character demanded by the obedience of faith. *Rom 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, Rom 16:26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:* What we believe and practice is far more important than the religious sideshow.

James shows that failure in one point of the law puts one under the guilt of breaking all. *Jas 2:10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* Under man’s law penalties for criminal acts are decided in a court of law. The same is true with God’s law. However under God’s law, the penalty could be born by a substitute and this is where sacrifice came in. It was to reconcile the repentant sinner with His Creator in fellowship. In the OT the sacrifices prefigured the “lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world”. Yet that intervention did not hold for certain crimes. There was no sin offering for the murderer and if God did not intervene (as with King David who murdered Uriah the Hittite), the death penalty was mandatory.

Notice that although the death penalty was mandatory for the actual physical sin but the inward commissioning of the same act, although of the same magnitude in the eyes of God, was not dealt with. Sins in thought are the same as sins in deed. Does this mean that the sin in thought will not be punished? Of course not. *Gal 5:21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.* The Mosaic law defines societies obligation to criminals and we might call it the lower court. The final judgement in the higher court will be conducted by the Creator Himself. Unless forgiveness in Christ is found between those two judiciaries, the penalty is eternal punishment.

#### [List of capital crimes](#)

The sins carrying the death penalty are:

1. Adultery (Lev 20:10-12, (man and woman).
2. Lying about virginity. Applies to girls who are still in their fathers' homes, who lie about their virginity, and are presented to their husband as a virgin. The accused is guilty until proved innocent. (Deut 22:20-21).

3. Having intercourse with a virgin pledged to be married to another. Applies to man who deflowers virgin pledged to be married, and to the virgin if she does not call for help. (Deut 22:23-24).
4. The daughter of a priest practicing prostitution (death by fire) (Lev 21:9).
5. Rape of someone who is engaged. If she is not engaged you have to marry her and give her father 50 shekels. (Deut 22:25).
6. Men practicing bestiality. (Both man and animal die). (Lev 20:15)
7. Women practicing bestiality (Both woman and animal die). (Lev 20:16)
8. Having intercourse with your father's wife, as distinct from "your mother" (both die). (Lev 20:20).
9. Having intercourse with your daughter in law. (Lev 20:30)
10. Incest. (Lev 20:17)
11. Homosexuality. (Lev 20:13).
12. Marrying a woman and her daughter. They are all burnt to death (Lev 20:14)
13. Worshipping idols (Ex 22:20, Lev 20:1-5, Deut 17:2-7).
14. Blasphemy (Lev 24:14-16,23).
15. Breaking the Sabbath (Ex 31:14, Numb 15:32-36).
16. Practicing magic (Ex 22:18).
17. Being a medium or spiritist. (stoning) (Lev 20:27).
18. Trying to convert people to another religion. (stoning) (Deut 13:1-11, 18:20).
19. Apostasy. If most people in a town come to believe in a different god. (Kill everybody, including animals, and burn the town.) (Deut 13:12-15)
20. Giving one of your descents to Molech. (Lev 20:2)
21. Non-priests going near the tabernacle when it is being moved. (Numb 1:51) **CEREMONIAL.**
22. Being a false prophet. (Deut 13:2-3, Deut 18:20, Zech 13:2-3)
23. Striking your parents (Ex 21:15).
24. Cursing your parents (Ex 21:17, Lev 20:9).
25. Being a stubborn and rebellious son. And being a profligate and a drunkard (stoning) (Deut 21:18-21)
26. Murder. However if a slave is beaten to death the owner is "punished" not necessarily killed. If the slave survives the beating then there is no punishment. (Gen 9:6, Ex 21:12, Num 35:16-21).
27. Kidnapping and selling a man (unlawful slavery) (Ex 21:16).
28. Perjury (in certain cases) (Deut 19:15 - 21). *Deu 19:18 And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Deu 19:19 Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. Deu 19:20 And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you.*
29. Ignoring the verdict of a judge (or a priest!) (Deut 17:8-13).
30. Not penning up a known dangerous bull, if the bull subsequently kills a man or a woman. (Ex 21:29) Both the animal and the reckless owner of the dangerous bull are to be put to death.
31. Living in a city that failed to surrender to the Israelites. (Kill all the men, make the women and children slaves.) Deut 20:12-14.
32. A male who is not circumcised. Genesis 17:14. **CEREMONIAL.**
33. Eating leavened bread during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Exodus 12:15. **CEREMONIAL.**



34. Manufacturing anointing oil. Exodus 30:33. **CEREMONIAL.**
35. Engaging in ritual animal sacrifices other than at the temple. Leviticus 17:1-9. **CEREMONIAL.**
36. Sexual activity with a woman who is menstruating: Leviticus 20:18.
37. Consuming blood: This would presumably include eating rare meat and black pudding Leviticus 17:10.
38. Eating peace offerings while ritually unclean: Leviticus 7:20. **CEREMONIAL.**
39. Waiting too long before consuming sacrifices: Leviticus 19:5-8. **CEREMONIAL.**
40. Going to the temple in an unclean state: Numbers 19:13. **CEREMONIAL.**

When a man transgressed the laws of property by fraud, theft or murder, he then rendered his own rights to property up to the judgement of God. The right to ownership was dependent upon maintaining the framework of the 8<sup>th</sup> Command.

The boundaries of these laws varied according to your status, so the law might be lenient or severe in limiting your rights. If you look at the Sphere Sovereignities of the marriage boundaries (p48) you will see a change in the NT law order. The NT makes a boundary between believers and unbelievers (contracting a marriage is forbidden). Likewise the boundary between man and animal is maintained and it is a perversion of the creation ordinance. *Rom 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.*

Something has happened to simplify the OT order and it is the death of Christ. The death of Christ destroys the Levitical Priesthood in order to raise up the Priesthood of Melkizedek and the priesthood of all believers. Secondly the covenant broken by the nation of Jews is re-established in Christ with the faithful, that is Jew and Gentile, such that Israel now becomes New Covenant people.

If we apply the merits of Christ' work to the OT laws of capital punishment we should see a number of the offences removed, because being associated with the ceremonies of Mosaic law, the ceremonies being rendered null and void or rather fulfilled in Christ, are removed from our list. There is though a sense in which these ceremonies have a 'typical' character relating to holiness. There is a higher spiritual sense to these laws as they are kept in Christ, temporally however, they can have no application. The judicial laws do not appear to have suffered any change. The question of whether we as Christian should get them instituted as statutory laws in the Nation today remains to be answered, since our Kingdom is not of this world.

#### What is life and death?

We see that death is not limited to physical death, *Mat 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* Life does not cease when our body appears to be lifeless. The death penalty merely accelerates the transition from this life to the next and hastens the final judgement.

While we have seen that there are acts which carry the death sentence for taking another life, there are some issues involving the taking of life which are less clearly defined. Moral dilemmas such as:

- a) abortion and contraception,
- b) war and revolution,
- c) euthanasia, eugenics and genetic manipulation and engineering.
- d)

There are as we approach these problems a number other laws at work:

1. The law of sin and death.

The only cure for this evil is the final application of the work of redemption at the last judgement. *1Co 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.* And it is achieved by Christ alone. Man will never become master of his destiny because he is a servant and death will never be removed by man.

As sin works its law in man, it will produce lust, making the abolition of war theoretical rather than a reality. *Jas 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?* War shall only cease with the appearing of Christ.

2. Famine, disease and poverty will always be with us. *Joh 12:8 For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.* The Apocalyptic horsemen are already running, *Zec 1:8 I saw by night, and behold a man riding upon a red horse, and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom; and behind him were there red horses, speckled, and white,* and in John's Revelation are still marching the earth. This I think is the importance of the Horsemen. They are figures of sin, death, Hades, famine, poverty and war. All consideration of Christian activity and human activity must be viewed against the activities of these Horsemen. The white rider is crowned in Revelation and is Christ.

The horsemen are the spirits of the heavens, subduing the earth, economics and morality. *Zec 6:1 And I turned, and lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and, behold, there came four chariots out from between two mountains; and the mountains were mountains of brass. Zec 6:2 In the first chariot were red horses; and in the second chariot black horses; Zec 6:3 And in the third chariot white horses; and in the fourth chariot grisled and bay horses. Zec 6:4 Then I answered and said unto the angel that talked with me, What are these, my lord? Zec 6:5 And the angel answered and said unto me, **These are the four spirits of the heavens,** which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. Zec 6:6 The black horses which are therein go forth into the north country; and the white go forth after them; and the grisled go forth toward the south country. Zec 6:7 And the bay went forth, and sought to go that they might walk to and fro through the earth: and he said, Get you hence, walk to and fro through the earth. So they walked to and fro through the earth. Zec 6:8 Then cried he upon me, and spake unto me, saying, Behold, these that go toward the north **country have quieted my spirit in the north country.***

What we sometimes instigate may seem righteous, but through our ignorance of God's plan it becomes sin. For example in John chapter 11, Jesus lets Lazarus die knowing He must raise him. What would we do, stop him dying? The Lord Almighty is working His purpose out. It is not that man might control the earth by law but that man might regain his true position of creaturehood under Christ. Thus the new creature is renewed in knowledge or as Paul says, *Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; Eph 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; Eph 4:24*

*And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

Our present lives are lived within the mesh of the decree of predestination, but in that mesh we are still responsible for our actions. When we lack knowledge we are in grave danger of committing error. The Scriptures do not give us great clarity in some matters and because of ignorance we may unwittingly consign the innocent to the grave. The lack of knowledge makes medicine a matter of statistical probability rather than certainty. Not knowing the end of his action, a man is always fallible. In economic planning, man cannot predict production because providence might decree adverse weather, unusual demand, disease (apocalyptic Horsemen) all of which may thwart any attempt at success. Yet despite such uncertainties, instead of making man more dependent on the Revelation of God, such as Joseph in Egypt, or Agabus prophesying a famine (upon which survival depended) there is the increasing tendency to by-pass God and consult the necromancer!

Nancy Reagan secretly consulted astrologer Joan Quigley regularly throughout the 1980s. It was a minor scandal when President Reagan's former chief of staff Donald T. Regan revealed what he called the administration's "most closely guarded secret." "Virtually every major move and decision the Reagan's made during my time as White House chief of staff was cleared in advance with a woman in San Francisco who drew up horoscopes to make certain that the planets were in a favourable alignment for the enterprise," Donald Regan wrote in his 1988 memoir (For the Record: From Wall Street to Washington). It is no wonder that in many cases businesses use Astrology to give a man a sense of security, that they can master their destiny, because they hope to predict the outcome.

It is clear that the Christian requires Divine Knowledge whether by the Bible or revelation in the personal life, to make a right decision. In the event that there is no direct revelation he must submit to his conscience the relevant scriptures and act in a merciful manner and in a spirit of meekness. *Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

### Defining life

The sixth Command is concerned with the sanctity of life and not unreasonably, the need for a careful definition of life becomes necessary when we consider our behaviour in respect to, say the unborn child as the subject of a judicial deprivation of life support or animals as test beds for new drugs. When a third party assumes the right to take life for any cause, the door of the concentration camp is swung wide open.

What is life? It is not an easy question. We use the word life with a number of qualifications. We talk of social life, economic life, insect life, wild life, plant life, pond life, we have a lifestyle, a respect for life, we talk of the meaning of life, we have a hard life, a new life, a love life, and are variously obsessed with night life, temporal life, spiritual life and eternal life. Whatever we may mean by life, absolutely it is given by God and is not just to creatures that breath. Life is not breath. *Act 17:25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.*

We talk of various modes of life and whether or not we are conscious of it, we are breaking down various aspects of what we see into compartments, so as to handle the different phenomena and we are philosophising. It is not my purpose to present the introduction to philosophy here, but to present the basis of Herman Dooyeword's system as an analytical tool. (We have an appendix covering this subject in our book "Revelation"<sup>16</sup> p 140, Appendix 2). When we look at something, any object, we can make a distinction between a tulip and a tree by breaking down what we see into a series of aspects which mark the individuality of everything we see.

Dooyeword classified the order of aspects and grouped them in ascending order of importance, the lower opened out into the higher. The son cannot exist without a father and the father without a grandfather. At the top of the list is faith. In the unbeliever it is the faith of self, the will of the flesh, dead faith but in the believer it is the living faith of the Son of God. Depending on this faith we shall determine our own morals, thence our laws and takes and evolve our society

When talking of life we use it in connection with various aspects and I suggest that life can only be defined by the aspect it relates to. The life of faith is different from the social life and the plant life. The life of faith may determine social life and the social life may in turn affect the plant life. Life as we have been using it refers to certain aspects of our existence.

Defining life is like defining 'nothing' or 'time', it is by a series of abstractions. In the creation God brought forth the plants and trees, but did not call them living souls. Economically, a tree was as a man's life. *Deu 20:19 When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege.*

Biologically there was not the same comparison. Living is applied firstly to the creatures of the sea. *Gen 1:20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.* These creatures along with the beasts of the earth were forms of life lacking the distinction of man, that man is distinguished by his faith in God, but not for his spiritual status. *Gen 2:7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.* The highest element of God's creation, man, was given dominion over the beasts, fowls and fishes, who in turn were given the plants kingdom for food. The plants in their turn were given the earth as the sphere of their existence. There are clear spheres of operation and boundaries of existence.

In creation man was not initially given the animals to eat. Yet he kept flocks. I think that it would have been part of man's duty to minister to the creatures (as Noah in the Ark), but through sin he lost dominion over much of the animal kingdom. Animal life was for God alone until after the flood.

I suggest that we have an animal creation for the following reasons:

1. To set forth the aspects of Christ's sacrificial redemption.
2. To teach the nature of holiness (as in clean and unclean).
3. As servant's of man in the duties imposed by God. Adam was commanded to till the ground – there was a use for a creature. Animals do not primarily appear for food. Man is elevated into partaking parts of the animal with two notable exceptions among the clean

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<sup>16</sup> <https://archive.org/stream/REVELATIONByMAW/REVELATION%20by%20MAW#page/n139/mode/2up>

animals, the blood and the fat (which is bought out in Leviticus). I suggest it was known from Adam. *Gen 9:2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Gen 4:4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:*

Man's attitude to plants and creatures including men, was governed by the aspect of faith. Faith informed him of his behaviour towards higher and lower forms of life. Faith informed him of how much of the creation he could consume. It was not said that taking the life of a plant or animal was in the same class as taking the life of a man.

Let us rephrase the question "what is life?" so as to say "What are the boundaries of life?" Life and the right to life is defined by the Creator, God having authority over all the creation with man under Him and man in turn over the remaining creation. The boundaries of life are modified as the plan of redemption advances. Noah's day initiated one modification (ritually clean animals could now be eaten), Peter in Acts of Apostles, reveals another in the NT (ritual distinction between clean and unclean is removed).

The fundamental difference between brute beasts and man exists in the realm of faith and morals. Man not beasts carries the image of God and the process of the fall is reversed by the renewal in Christ. *Col 3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge **after the image of him that created him:** Col 3:11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

The boundaries of man's operations are given by God and modified by God. The permission to eat meat is first given at the end of the flood and this is significant, as animals initially were not created as food for man. Using animals for food is becoming expensive our age because there is energy loss in converting vegetables to animal protein. Vegetable protein is thus a cheaper product than animal protein. Animal husbandry was initially for other purposes than meat. Vegetarians may eventually be in the majority, not for reason of sensitivity, but because of economics.

Meat eating originated not by reason of an accident of nature, but by a Divine Decree. The conditions are significant.

1. God previously only had the animals as a sacrifice.
2. The world was ungodly and passed through judgement. *2Pe 2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.*
3. Noah passed through baptism showing his faith in God. *1Pe 3:20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.*
4. The world enters a new covenant with God. *Gen 9:9 And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you.*

The sequence of events is redemptive and against this background man has become a partaker of sacrifices. It is symbolic of a new communion with God. This has a NT significance. *1Co 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not **the communion of the blood of Christ**? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 1Co 10:17 For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. 1Co 10:18 Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?* Israel was in communion with the altar! This should be considered next time you eat meat.

The Bible shows meat eating as a religious participation in redemption with God. Finally in Christ the ultimate in food with the New Covenant. *Joh 6:53 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Joh 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. Rom 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*

We have authority to eat the creature, but the example of the Bible is also to care for the life of the creature.

1. The ox is not muzzled,
2. The lost sheep is found,
3. David protected *1Sa 17:34 And David said unto Saul, Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock.*
4. The Lord protected against annihilation. *Deu 22:6 If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young.*

What motivates us when dealing with creatures? Profit, economic progress, material wealth? What are the true motives that make men use creatures as test beds, behind the supposed humanitarian principles of saving life, advancing mankind, increasing standards of health? Christian scientific progress might well discover a different method and the possibility of an alternative to using God's creatures. The motive and direction would be from a religious base (prayer, prophecy and sanctified common sense) which might open up the secrets of life more quickly.

Unfortunately major progress in medicine and science has often come about through wars suggesting that desperate situations are highly motivational. The service to God however should provide the highest motive. Biblically, the relationship between man and disease has often at its roots spiritual problems. Answers may well be quicker obtained from theologians than scientists and the same could be applied to agriculture and industry.

Have we lost touch with the creation? A number of excellent medicines and remedies can be found in the natural creation i.e. penicillin, certain hormones, quinine. These medicines can produce less harmful side effects than synthetic drugs. We might also consider whether we are using medicines to mask symptoms that have spiritual and moral origins.

## The origin of man

In looking at the complex issues in regard to life and taking life, let us start with the origin of man's life. We are the result of a sexual union between man and woman and that sexual union has its boundaries. We dealt with certain social, moral and faith aspects of sexual relations in the 7<sup>th</sup> Command and we saw the limits imposed by God with regard to consanguinity, fornication, adultery, divorce and the reason why it was typically significant of Holiness and the Bride of Christ (religious or faith aspects). Here in the 6<sup>th</sup> Command we are going to look at the judicial, social and economic aspects of life.

**Judicially:** The superiority of the Priesthood of Melchisedech and the acknowledgment of this by the Levi's act of service is described in the book of Hebrews. *Heb 7:1 For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; Heb 7:2 To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Heb 7:3 Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. Heb 7:4 Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. Heb 7:5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: Heb 7:6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. Heb 7:7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. Heb 7:8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. Heb 7:9 And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. Heb 7:10 For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.*

The subject is one about "seminal identity". Dr Lloyd Jones in his book on Roman's chapter 5 (p213), discussed the implication of the identity of the seed in the context of Adams sin. W.G.T Shedd commenting on Roman's chapter 5 (Dogmatic Theology Vol 2 p185) shows the Greek verb to sin is 2<sup>nd</sup> Aorist Active, that is to participate in the act. The total guilt of the first sin, thus committed by the entire race in Adam is imputed to each individual of the race, because of the indivisibility of guilt. Two men in a murder are equally guilty, they don't have half each. *Rom 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.* The one offence goes upon all. It does not get divided and so lessened in effect by propagation.

In what sense did we exist in Adam? In what sense did Levi exist in Abraham? A man requires the union of male and female seeds to form the zygote that implants in the womb and grows into the man. The father contains a part of that life. Levi required a mother and she was not Abraham! So Levi existed not in the physical and vital sense, because his mother's contribution had not yet been given. The seed of woman is specifically mentioned. *Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and **her seed**; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*

Levi existed judicially, as we also did in Adam. This clears up the controversy between the creationists and traduceans on the origin of the soul. The soul can exist morally and judicially in the sovereign

councils of God long before it appears in temporal life. The Traduceans (Tradux = grapevine) look at the moral/judicial existence whereas the creationists at the individuality structure called “I” which comes into existence in the womb, with its other modal aspects.

The seed or organic sperm is a form of existence comprising certain aspects of life, but not life as the whole that we call man. With Onan for instance the seed was spilled in the act of coitus interruptus, the first method of birth prevention used in scripture (also called Onanism) and this cost him his life. *Gen 38:8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother. Gen 38:9 And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. Gen 38:10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.*

Roman Catholics have used this as an argument against a form of birth control. (Dr A Klodterman – Family Planning and Christian Marriages, Birth control and the Christian). They argue that Onan’s punishment was much harsher than the failure to comply with the Levirate<sup>17</sup> Law of Moses. *Deu 25:9 Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.* The sin of Onan was because of another offence e.g. coitus interruptus. It should be seen though that God is here directly intervening to punish Onan for disobediently killing his seed. Ultimately, in the providence of God, Pharez, fathered by Judah, himself entered the line of Christ. The Bible never discusses birth control but the problem that concerned most women was being barren. Whatever a man might attempt to stop conception, God has the power to override, even in old age, as with Abraham. Onan was given a judicial sentence of death for practicing evil in God’s eyes because the seed here is viewed as life in a judicial sense (Levirate) as also in the case of Adam (original sin) and Abraham (tithe to Melchizedek).

The seed in a man can die and are removed from within his body by a natural process (this is not a sin). The seeds are still produced in a man who has a vasectomy and are removed naturally. The motive for a vasectomy must be considered later. The woman discharges her eggs during her month cycle and this process does not constitute an offence. I suggest that the avoidance of bringing about conception is not an offence as these elements of life do not of themselves, constitute the whole man, unless they come together. The duty to be fruitful must be considered in harmony with the command to subdue.

### The beginning of life

Next I will endeavour to show that as far as the 6<sup>th</sup> Command is concerned that man comes into physical and spiritual existence in the womb.

I did not define the difference between contraception and abortion and there is not much clarification from medical usage. For the purpose of our own discussion I shall use contraception in the context of stopping the egg and seed forming the zygote, I shall refer to abortion to the act of taking the fertilised ovum out from the womb, with or without implantation.

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<sup>17</sup> The term is a derivative of the Latin word levir meaning "husband's brother". Levirate marriage is a type of marriage in which the brother of a deceased man is obliged to marry his brother's widow, and the widow is obliged to marry her deceased husband's brother.



I suggest that contraception does not infringe the 6<sup>th</sup> Command. There will however, appear some devices which are called contraceptive, but by our definition would constitute abortion or a pill to bring on menstruation. In case anyone is thinking that there are natural methods such as the rhythm method that constitute as a non interfering method of stopping conception, “medical science has verified pregnancy taking place at every day during the total cycle”. (Quote in Miles on Sexual Understanding before Marriage p45/46).

Before any consideration on the subject of sterilisation and abortion, I want to approach the subject of when an organism becomes a man. There are three words in the OT rendered womb.

**Pudding** (בטן = beṭen): Nazarite from the womb. *Jdg 13:5 For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from **the womb**: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.*

**Paunch** (מעה = mē'eh): Two nations in thy womb. *Gen 25:23 And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.*

**Bulging** (רחם = rechem): Formed from the womb. *Isa 44:2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. Isa 44:24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself;*

It is clear from this that the womb is the factory of life. *Psa 139:13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. Psa 139:14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. Psa 139:15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Psa 139:16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.*

Conscious, sentient life is present in the womb. Babe speaks unto babe, John the Baptist responds to Jesus in the womb with joy. *Luk 1:41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. David admits his sinful conception and his shaping in iniquity. Psa 51:5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*

### The sanctity of life

One of the greatest testimonies to the humanity of the unborn child is found in *Exo 21:22 If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine.* There is some disagreement about the exegesis and so I will present the views upon this passage. Firstly, the fine it is suggested indemnifies the father against his loss, but does not protect the foetus. This is a “minority” opinion as far as I can determine and I take the following as the correct exegesis.

The section deals with various “fights and smites” among the people. The case in this section is the case of a bystander injured. The application can extend to any injuries caused to a third party as the result of a private affray. The pregnant woman is struck so as to cause the onset of birth (the fruit departing). For this act alone a fine is determined by the husband and enforced by the judges. If however, there is damage to mother or child, it is life for life, eye for eye. I take it that if the child dies upon birth the case becomes one of murder. This would suggest that criminally induced abortion is murder. Now what is the position where, say, a case of cancer of the cervix is diagnosed during pregnancy? The treatments of radical surgery or radiation therapy interrupt a pregnancy. Apparently abortion occurs rather promptly following external x-ray therapy. All treatment is advisory and you commit the decision to commend comment. The future is a statistical probability but the intention is to save life. In this world of sin it is a fact that some die to secure the safety of others. The intent was not to destroy and it is with God alone to forgive. The mother may alternatively choose to offer the child life in place of her.

So as far as I can see the Bible sees the creature in the womb as a living being in all its aspects of life but prior to conception life exists in a limited number of modal aspects.

What is the position morally of a couple who resort to Artificial Insemination<sup>18</sup>? Is it adultery? I would suggest that it came more under the nature of an adulterous relationship and the action comes through from a failure to acknowledge the Lord as the giver of life and law and resorts to human intervention. Fertility is by creation designed for the husband and his wife, carried out within the boundaries of law constituting marriage, outside of this it is sin.

A.I.D is not the same with animals because marriage has no meaning in the animal kingdom. The attempt to put man in the same category as the creature is an evolutionary capitulation and the next step is the exalting of the creature. *Rom 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Rom 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, Rom 1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*

I am often conscious that there are more outcries against animal cruelty by the public than human atrocities. Seal culling, fox hunting, hare coursing, often receive much attention, to the extent in some cases bringing Parliamentary legislation. Admittedly cruelty is the main grounds of outcry, but what about cruelty to the foetus? Because of the poverty of humanist moral philosophy, crushing seal pups with a metal spike is wrong, crushing a foetus with a scalpel is ‘right’ or socially acceptable.

The root of the abortion problem is in the human desire for autonomy to control life and death, both of which are the domain of God. Onan’s failure to comply with God’s law cost him his life. To control life is to control destiny and the Greek philosophy worked hard at it. The idea progressed further in the primitive science of eugenics, the deliberate attempt to foster the “best” characteristics in a society. The nature of what is best is a religious question, but not to divert too far, the question becomes one of salvation by selective breeding (keeping all the best characteristics) and wiping out the bad! It is attempting to solve spiritual problems by scientific manipulation.

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<sup>18</sup> A.I.D. Artificial insemination by donor.

We might call it proto- Darwinism, the preservation of the favoured races by deliberate intervention of man. The natural chaos has only been replaced by the chaos of man's philosophy. The reasons may have changed but the problems are still with us, State control, as opposed to God's control.

The child is the property of the parent, not the State and the continuing erosion of responsibility of men by giving up their God given rights to the State is destroying the family. With no responsibility for children as life, a pillar of the family is removed. The State is brother, sister, father and mother. The question of the legality of abortion is one which has and will continue. I would summarise our discussion citing the Apostolic Fathers (Loeb) "You shall not slay the child by causing abortion....".

#### Justifiable homicide

*Deu 21:18 If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Deu 21:19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; Deu 21:20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. Deu 21:21 And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: **so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear.** Deu 21:22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree: Deu 21:23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*

It is certainly a strange philosophy that hopes to give peace to parents and society by killing their offspring. The lesson is that God will have no rebels in His camp. Humanism and much of Christianity which it has infected, views moral responsibility as a growing up process and therefore would have an "age of accountability". This when inquired into becomes a random number (nobody knows what age it is). Laws involving labour have a threshold of 14, sexual consent 16, political responsibility 18, adulthood at 21 and retirement 60 or 65 years. What does the Bible suggest about age?

1. The child is a moral agent from conception. Proof: Death is the judicial sentence for moral offences and children die just like adults from Adam's sin. White coffins are a symbol of rebellion against the law of God which condemns all mankind since "all have sinned". This is sympathy over-ruling sense.

2. The parent is duly authorised by God to restrain, educate, discipline and chastise that child as a religious exercise. *Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: Deu 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Deu 6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: Deu 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Deu 6:8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. Deu 6:9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*

This is not teaching goodness for its own sake, it is teaching it as service to God. *Deu 6:18 And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the LORD: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD swore unto thy fathers.*

Chastisement must be viewed in its temporal redemptive setting. *Pro 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Pro 23:14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.* The son who does not obey his parents is in danger of the judgement of death, which will send him to sheol.

In its highest form it is seen in a redemptive role with regard to spiritual offences. Christ was chastised as a son, we will look at this later. *Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

In Matthew a judgement of corporal punishment is fully justified, but by men it must be for definite moral reasons, not spite or temper. *Deu 25:1 If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. Deu 25:2 And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Deu 25:3 Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.*

The Christian parent may find himself up against State intervention at this point. When Johnny arrives at school with bruised buttocks, he may well be confiscated from his parents on the grounds of their violence. The little offender gains sanctuary in the Welfare state along with the other criminals and parasites. In guarding against brutality the state has rejected justice. Biblical law recognised the rights of parents to exercise certain punishments of a certain type. The removal of this right is again a symptom of State control of the family.

We must ask though whether corporal punishment has a place in the NT church. Is this the way Christ would have us behave? Is this another aspect of the Law that was moderated by the hard heart of the OT?

The family did not appear to be able to unilaterally exercise the death penalty on its children. Perhaps this is because the capital offences were viewed as being the result of community offences. *Deu 21:19 Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; Deu 21:20 And they shall say unto the elders of his city.* Parental failure resulted in the application of the death sentence to the child. If the parent failed, he could not let the community suffer the consequences. It was like the Ox that gored and was known to do so. *Exo 21:28 If an ox gore a man or a woman, that they die: then the ox shall be surely stoned, and his flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox shall be quit. Exo 21:29 But if the ox were wont to push with his horn in time past, and it hath been testified to his owner, and he hath not kept him in, but that he hath killed a man or a woman; the ox shall be stoned, and his owner also shall be put to death.* The owner was to act responsibly to the community. I would apply the same judgement to the parent who tolerated a son who was in effect “won’t to push”.

Juvenile death sentences would be viewed today with horror. The judge in a recent rape case exercised leniency on a 14 year old offender because he expected him to mature and change. The Bible has no juvenile courts because its law is empowering all. The juvenile is bound by the law of the parents, the parent being judge, prophet, priest and king to him. If the offence cannot be treated

within the family unit, it is dealt with by Civil judges. The parent then is a policeman and pedagogue. Consider also the economic advantages to the community of this saving.

The death sentence was then a reality for the developing child as it was for the aged. One law for all and a law they were to make known to themselves.

In the NT the church has no power to execute only to excommunicate.

### Youth is no excuse

As a result of the humanising of law, the 1933 Children and Young Person Act excluded people under 18 from hanging. 1887 was the last time a person under that age was hung. The case of Leopold and Loeb in the USA shows the undermining of Biblical law. On May 21, 1924, two brilliant, wealthy, Chicago teenagers attempted to commit the perfect crime just for the thrill of it. Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb kidnapped 14-year-old Bobby Franks, bludgeoned him to death in a rented car, and then dumped Franks' body in a distant culvert. Although they thought their plan was foolproof, Leopold and Loeb made a number of mistakes that led police right to them. The subsequent trial, featuring famous attorney Clarence Darrow, made headlines and was often referred to as "the trial of the century."

With the public decidedly against the boys and an extremely large amount of evidence tying the boys to the murder, it was almost certain that Leopold and Loeb were going to receive the death penalty. Fearing for his nephew's life, Loeb's uncle went to famed defence attorney Clarence Darrow (who would later participate in the famous Scopes Monkey Trial) and begged him to take the case. Darrow was not asked to free the boys, for they were surely guilty; instead, Darrow was asked to save the boys' lives by getting them life sentences rather than the death penalty. Darrow, a long-time advocate against the death penalty, took the case.

Most people thought Darrow would plead them not guilty by reason of insanity, but in a surprising last minute twist, Darrow had them plead guilty. With Leopold and Loeb pleading guilty, the trial would no longer require a jury because it would become a sentencing trial. Darrow believed that it would be harder for one man to live with the decision to hang Leopold and Loeb than it would be for twelve who would share the decision.

The fate of Leopold and Loeb was to rest solely with Judge John R. Caverly. The prosecution had over 80 witnesses that presented the cold blooded murder in all its gory details. The defence focused on psychology, especially the boys' upbringing. On August 22, 1924, Clarence Darrow gave his final summation. It lasted approximately two hours and is considered one of the best speeches of his life. After listening to all the evidence presented and thinking carefully on the matter, Judge Caverly announced his decision on September 19, 1924. Judge Caverly sentenced Leopold and Loeb to jail for 99 years for kidnapping and for the rest of their natural lives for murder. He also recommended that they never be eligible for parole. These were hardly children, yet were treated as such.

The outcome would have been different under Moses.

### Corporal punishment

I will now close this section by dealing with juvenile offences by looking closely at corporal punishment. Is it primitive savagery to beat a human being? The answer is yes, if no offence has warranted it, or if the punishment is brutal revenge. We have seen reforms in laws which have wiped

out systems of Biblical law, e.g. slavery, because of its abuses not because the principle is absolutely wrong.

I am looking at corporal punishment here because as someone said, “it may be able to turn the foot from the gallows”. *Pro 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Pro 23:14 Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and **shalt deliver his soul from hell**.* The rod delivers from Sheol, the grave, not from sin as a principle of heart for only Christ does that. Enforcing outward conformity encouraged a restraint on sinful behaviour.

Eli may have thought to have found a better way than God’s way? *1Sa 3:13 For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.* Child psychology was administered with a rod but was it in love? *Pro 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.* The method is described in *Deu 25:1 If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked. Deu 25:2 And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to **lie down**, and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Deu 25:3 Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed: lest, if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.* It was conducted:

1. Lying down.
2. In the presence of a judge.
3. With a fixed maximum limited penalty.

The Jews with their usual aplomb make “before his face”, before the face of the criminal and so they beat the man on his shoulders and chest while he lay on his back. However, it is the back that has the rod, it is 1. For the ignorant, 2. For the foolish. 3. As a whip of bridle. *Pro 10:13 In the lips of him that hath understanding wisdom is found: but a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding. Pro 19:29 Judgments are prepared for scorners, and stripes for the back of fools. Pro 26:3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool’s back.*

The maximum penalty was fixed at 40 stripes. A cat of nine tails<sup>19</sup> would by this equal 9 stripes per stroke. We have the reason ‘so that the brother (or child) does not become despicable’. The figure 40 is seen in connection with so many of God’s dealings with his people and basically it is the number associated with humbling, proving, estrangement. Christ likewise learns obedience by suffering and shows his Divine resilience in overcoming in His 40 days. *Num 14:34 After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.* This number 40 (maximum) teaches us something of the intent of corporal punishment.

The passage that best sheds a light on the implications of corporal punishment is the Messianic Isaiah. *Isa 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? Isa 53:2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. Isa 53:3 He*

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<sup>19</sup> The British Navy punishment was to make your own ‘cat’

*is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Isa 53:5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isa 53:7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

We “the Jews” saw the smitten Messiah suffering under the hand of God. He was wounded on account of, because of our transgressions. ‘Stricken’ is same word for the ‘smite’ of leprosy and it led some to the idea of a leprous Messiah.

Yet we find in the effects and affects of God’s dealings with Christ, a peace procured by chastisement. “The chastisement of (to procure, to produce) our peace (with God)”.

In other words chastisement tends towards peace and that is also a result of restoration, the principle of Biblical justice. *Rom 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: Rom 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

The direct link with healing becomes clear now. Disease and infirmity were given to Israel as a chastisement. *Mat 8:16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: Mat 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.*

*Disobedience brought sickness and death. Deu 28:58 If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD; Deu 28:59 Then the LORD will make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance, and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance. Deu 28:60 Moreover he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt, which thou wast afraid of; and they shall cleave unto thee. Deu 28:61 Also every sickness, and every plague, which is not written in the book of this law, them will the LORD bring upon thee, until thou be destroyed.*

The chastisement of Christ is the judicial substitution of Christ for His people. The Nation shall no longer be infirm because Christ has taken our iniquities. He has removed the effect of God’s judgement by being chastised Himself in place of His people. As a result many are healed in body as proof of the Messianic substitution. We should then view corporal punishment as ultimately Messianic in its conception. It has a purgative effect, it restores peace, it humbles, it proves and it protects society in some measure from the possibility of greater ills by restraint.

*Deu 30:15 See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; Deu 30:16 In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it. Deu 30:17 But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and*

*serve them; Deu 30:18 I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.*

### War and death

The subject of war and its justification is a subject like many under this command that has caused division. The simple definition might be conflict for sovereignty and the paradox of nations fighting under God is summed up in a simple verse. J.C. Squite wrote:

God heard the embattled nations sing and shout  
"Gott strafe England"<sup>20</sup> and "God save the King!"  
God this, God that, and God the other thing –  
"Good God!" said God, "I've got my work cut out!"

The consequence of war further strains the ingenuity of nations. The German's were expected to pay £100,000,000 per annum for 66 years as compensation for her war crimes (WW1 Treaty of Versailles)! The British Empire union reminded the public that the brutal soldier was the man who would sell you goods after the war, so have nothing to do with the German's until the crimes committed by them against humanity have been expiated. Boycott their goods (p151 The Almighty Continent – J Terraine). Add to this the wounded maimed, widowed and orphaned (55,000,000 WW2 alone) and the chaos provoked by war makes it an entirely distasteful affair, yet one which humanity soon forgets and soon again engages in. Why?

There are a number of reasons for war. It is part of the cosmic conflict between the Creator and the creature. *Rev 6:1 And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see. Rev 6:2 And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. Rev 6:3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. Rev 6:4 And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.*

Wars are inevitable as sinful humanity runs towards its sorrowful end. *Mat 24:1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. Mat 24:2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. Mat 24:3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? Mat 24:4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. Mat 24:5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. Mat 24:6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. Mat 24:7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. Mat 24:8 All these are the beginning of sorrows.*

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<sup>20</sup> "God punish England"



And from where do these wars spring? *Jas 4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Jas 4:2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Jas 4:3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*

Behind the events of this world are the powers of darkness. *Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.* The verse shows us the spiritual nature of conflict. Temporal wars are a consequence of spiritual disorder.

### Pacifism

John the Baptist does not encourage the military to leave their occupation. *Luk 3:14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.* In other words, carry out your duties honourably.

One of the reasons that early Christians did not join the Roman legions was because it required an oath to Caesar who was viewed as a 'god'. This was a matter of conscience and a bridge that many could not cross. It was not fighting that was the problem it was the oath to another god.

The CoE in article 37 says, "It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons, and serve in the wars". It was a rethink on this issue by Anthony Norris Groves (a pacifist) that steered him away from the CoE (History of Brethren Movement. Coad p15).

The Christian dilemma is summed up nicely by Bicknell (39 Articles p 553 #2):

"So too when the State's existence is threatened by an external enemy, force may be rightly used to repel him. That is, the State can call on its citizens to take up arms in its defence.....The ordinary man finds it difficult to understand how the same persons can avail themselves of the protection of the State for their lives and property, yet refuse to support the State in defending itself by war against destruction and pillage by external foes. But their position raises in an acute form the problem of the Christian's attitude to war"

John Murray, a veteran of the "Black Watch" who lost an eye in a front line engagement in 1918 WW1, had no uncertainty about the justness of war as he addressed the Westminster Seminary Intake in 1944 (Selected works – collected writings p104 Vol1). Menno Simmons the Anabaptist would have burst. He could not agree – "Let every one of you guard against all strange doctrine of sword, and RESISTANCE and other like things which is nothing short of a fair flower under which lies hidden an evil serpent which has shot his venom into many" (Collected writings p49).

On one hand we have the love and forgive group (pacifist) and on the other the love and justice brigade (warmongers), doves and hawks. Let us then see what happens in the Bible and what we may deduce from Scripture as our duty.

Abraham was an old man of 75 when acting under God's directive he migrated. He was essentially a peace loving and gentle man and timid despite God's presence. *Gen 12:4 So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.....Gen 13:7 And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land. Gen 13:8 And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.*

The land of his day was one of violence and intrigue. *Gen 14:1 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations; Gen 14:2 That these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. Gen 14:3 All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. Gen 14:4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. Gen 14:5 And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaims in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzims in Ham, and the Emims in Shaveh Kiriathaim.*

It is not then surprising to see Abram as he was then, in league with certain of the inhabitants. *Gen 14:13 And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram.* Abram had further trained men and armed them, as Benson would have it "catechised servants", not only instructed in the art of war, but instructed in the principles of religion" This would certainly accord with Genesis 18 (a puritan Army?).

*Gen 14:14 And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. Gen 14:15 And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus.* Abraham is a prepared man, one who also has not cut himself off from the world where they may have some common ground. The idea of unequal yoke might apply to the difference of worship, but the common social and economic necessities form some link. We as Christians import foreign goods, food prepared by sinners under rulers who are far from righteous or moral, yet we do not isolate ourselves. *1Co 5:10 Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.* Neither does Abraham. He has the lowest form of fellowship with his heathen neighbours consisting in the necessities of life.

Abraham does not "warmonger" and is only drawn in by the news of the captivity of his brother (notice it was in fact his nephew Elam, against whom he fights, who is also Semitic. He does not exterminate the enemy and brings back property and souls and there appears in this the principle of restoration. The enemy are now servitors of the victors.

The appearance of Melchizedek (who was a King and thus we suppose had armies) is important. The whole action of Abraham is one which receives Divine blessing. *Gen 14:19 And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: Gen 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all. Gen 14:21 And the king of Sodom said unto Abram, Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself.*

The tithe by which Abraham blesses God is introduced now into the scripture which gives us the basic meaning of the tithe. *Gen 28:20 And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, Gen 28:21 So that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the LORD be my God: Gen 28:22 And this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee.*

Certainly Abraham was sure God was with him and had proof. He wages a just war to right an aggression on behalf of a righteous man, Lot. His men could truly say "God with us". The German's had "God with us" on their tunic buttons, yet in their case did not gain victory.

Does Abraham's action give us a precedent and principle? It does under the OT. Abraham is enabling the righteous to exist. He is upholding law and order for those who are seeking it. Aggression then has justification if the motives of upholding Divine justice are primary, when order through reason fails. Yet this cuts across Christ's teaching to turn the cheek, *Mat 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.*

The point which is now raised is "to what extent may the individual among the many dissent from a National decision?" I try to avoid using the term conscience. A person who says my conscience will not let me fight means I will not fight because I believe it is a crime or I believe it is wrong.

I hesitate to use conscience because it required definition. *Heb 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from **an evil conscience**, and our bodies washed with pure water.* This verse speaks of an evil conscience. *1Ti 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck.* Speaks of a **good conscience**. Yet again, there is a weak conscience, *1Co 8:12 But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.*

What sort of conscience does the so called conscientious objector have, weak, good or evil? The issue is not solved by the conscience, but by the information which feeds the conscience. The conscience should bear witness to the truth. *Rom 2:15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing **witness**, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.* The education of this faculty will decide its service to us. It is good if educated by God's law and evil if fed with autonomous philosophy. Conscience is not grounds for dissent! The law of God alone is. The conscience may dissent from matters that present themselves to us as choices outside of the law, such as eating meat rather than vegetables.

God gives the following reasons why a man may be excused from partaking in war.

1. The man who has not partaken in the initial fruits of his labour. *Deu 20:5 And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. Deu 20:6 And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it.*

2. The newly wed. *Deu 20:7 And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her.*

3. The faint hearted and cowardly for a very good reason. *Deu 20:8 And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.*

So we see the mercy of God in excusing us from duties to war in order to partake for a season the fruits of peace. The State has not recognised God's way and so it has punished those who were frail.

Now I come to a very important point. The illustrations and examples that we have examined are based upon the OT. The OT Kingdom of Israel was an earthly Kingdom of God with earthly battles. The NT Kingdom of God is a heavenly Kingdom with Spiritual battles. Jesus, when confronted by Pontius Pilate, made it clear where His Kingdom lay, *Joh 18:36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* The Christian must ask where their Kingdom is and where their loyalties lie. If it is this world, then you might consider fighting for it but it is not.

It extends further than this. We are exhorted not to engage in physical violence. *Mat 5:38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: Mat 5:39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.* Does that mean that we are not to oppose evil? No, but it does mean that we can peacefully and non-violently oppose evil.

The idea that war is the means of restoring peace in this world is a lie of the devil. At the time of writing (2016), the lying politicians have precipitated chaos in the Middle East and destabilised the whole region, in theory, to protect their own borders. They have failed completely. Peace can only come through the mediation of Jesus Christ, *Rom 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:*

The idea that you have a right before God to destroy another human being because you do not subscribe to their ideology runs counter to the whole ethos of the Gospel, Peace with God through Christ. The idea that you are obliged to take up arms in defence of your own evil rulers, supposedly to protect your status quo (or rather theirs), is unfounded in the NT.

We are soldiers of Christ and we are at war but it is not an earthly war. *2Ti 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 2Ti 2:4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

### [Killing yourself](#)

I will close this examination of this Command by looking at two more subjects, suicide and euthanasia.

Suicide literally means "a slayer of oneself" and in the 17<sup>th</sup> century went by the title of "self Homicide". It used to be constituted a legal offence if the person was of years of discretion and a sound mind! The legal consequences were to deprive the corpse of the rites of the state church funeral. The deprivation of the funeral rites called "Christian burial", appear to be a sign of the displeasure of the fellowship (W G T Shedd Dogmatic Theology vol 2 p 413) and so the corpse was not put in 'consecrated' ground. Here is a good illustration of Judaistic infiltration into NT Christianity.

The method of disposal was reminiscent of Bram Stokers dealings with the Transylvanian vampire Count Dracula. The body was interred by night at Cross Roads with a stake driven through the breast. The crown then stepped in to confiscate his goods (and his debts). He did not lose freehold property rights and the blood (his seed) was not corrupted. Queen Victoria abolished the confiscation of property (34 Vict C23). Up until 1961 suicide and attempted suicide was prosecuted as a crime, the offence being a breach of the peace.

Some of the Greeks, the stoics, believed suicide to be “a right”, a corollary to freedom. This indicates the autonomy of thought of the Greeks and the rejection that life was the product and possession of a creator. It is in a sense deification of self. Among non Christians suicide has been acceptable as part of cult rituals or customs.

1. The suttee<sup>21</sup> where the Hindu wives jumped on the blazing corpse of their husband. The custom symbolised the mystical unity of souls.
2. In modern Japan suicide is a symbol of sincerity. The mother will kill herself and her children. This elicits praise rather than condemnation since the children are considered part of the parents and to leave them motherless would be cruel.

Now why should we consider this? Statistically 6,233 suicides of people aged 15 and over were registered in the UK in 2013, 252 more than in 2012 (a 4% increase). In America In 2014, there were 42,773 deaths by suicide. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death; homicide ranks 17th. These are the “successes” rather than the “failed attempts”. It is a social problem with many causes and it tends to show a seasonal peak in the summer.

Christians have almost unanimously condemned it under the 6<sup>th</sup> Command. I shall be an exception. In Scripture we see suicide by:

1. Ahiothopel. *2Sa 17:23 And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city, and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father.*
2. Saul. *1Sa 31:4 Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. 2Sa 21:14 And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah, in the sepulchre of Kish his father: and they performed all that the king commanded. And after that God was intreated for the land.*

Both of them are not denied burial with their families.

3. Judas. *Mat 27:1 When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: Mat 27:2 And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Mat 27:3 Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Mat 27:4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the*

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<sup>21</sup> Sati (Sanskrit: satī, also spelled suttee) is an obsolete Hindu funeral custom where a widow immolated herself on her husband's pyre, or committed suicide in another fashion shortly after her husband's death

*innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. Mat 27:5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

4. Samson. Jdg 16:30 And Samson said, Let me die with the Philistines. And he bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein. So the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life.

With Ahithopel, there was chagrin at his rejected council and possibly the foresight that as Absalom's rebellion would fail and he would inevitably meet a traitor's death (so it was self inflicted judgement). Saul would not suffer the ignominy of abuse at the Philistines hands! Judas was an act of remorse – self condemnation and execution. The case of Samson is yet again suicide. God grants Samson strength for vengeance and Samson again has the strength of the Nazarite. He too is not separated from the grave of his father.

These suicides are not of themselves a justification for suicide. The Bible makes no comment on the ethics of these actions, unless with Samson the intervention of God to restore his strength be a direct approval. Augustine says Samson was wrong, unless the Holy Ghost commanded him! We must see that there are a variety of causes which make a man resort to this end and it is generally despair at being unable to control and manipulate circumstances.

Motive however is the key to understanding. Bear in mind the comments made in our opening discourse on sovereignty and the problem of fallibility. We have duties in this life and responsibilities to God and our neighbour. The selfish termination of these is a sin against love. Love of death (sin) is greater than love of family! Yet there come situations where some manifestation of love requires the sacrifice of life. *Joh 10:14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. Joh 10:15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. Joh 10:16 And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Joh 10:17 Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. Joh 10:18 No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.*

This is a declaration of intended suicide. *Rom 5:6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Rom 5:7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. Rom 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. Rom 5:10 For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.*

This shows us that self sacrifice is often motivated by an estimation of the worth of another's well being. In 1912 the famous words, "I am just going outside and may be some time" were attributed to Captain Lawrence Edward Grace "Titus" Oates. With these words, Oates set out to meet his death in the frozen wastes of Antarctica aged 31, and entered the history books. He was one of five men who died as they tried to return home from Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated expedition to the South Pole in 1912. Captain Oates is remembered because of his act of self-sacrifice, committed because he

believed he was slowing the others down. It was suicide but it became an example of the nature of self-less sacrifice.

The mother will risk her life for the child. In the natural realm, creatures will expose themselves to death to save their offspring. Consider the man who by reason of his knowledge and frailty fears he might betray thousands of his friends under torture but gives his own life to save them? I cannot then condemn suicide per se, because it does not always show a dereliction of duty, on the contrary it may be the highest token of love of service to others. *Joh 15:12 This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Joh 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* This is the suicide of self sacrifice.

Was Jesus death suicide?

### Is there a good death?

Euthanasia is derived from the Greek meaning “a good death” or a gentle or easy death. The question of abortion cast the shadow of euthanasia over life. It might take two forms

1. Compulsory. This would cover genocide, ethnic cleansing, racial purification and abortion.
2. Voluntary. Particularly where an individual feels that their quality of life and their dependence upon others makes them a burden.

The State already claims the right to end the lives of its elderly and unborn and it is a short step before the State has the right to kill anyone that does not conform to its ideal stereotype. Nazi Germany is a typical example If it comes to pass that they do get that power, what are the consequences?

1. Numerical limitation (abortion up to 20 weeks).
2. Biotic, limitation due to imperfections (disability, epileptics, deaf etc).
3. Moral, those who hold different views, such as those who hold that homosexuality is wrong.
4. Faith, persecuted for the gospel.

Voluntary euthanasia is a different matter. It comes very close to suicide depending on the motives. The chronically sick might be given pain killers and the dose which alleviates their pain might kill. The discomfort becomes so consuming that relief is gained by shutting the whole system down.. Job could bear it because his faith was dominant.

There is a secondary effect of opiates that they are addictive and the more powerful the more addictive. Etorphine (more powerful than LSD) is  $10^4$  times more powerful than morphine. Do we then consent that a limited addiction is justifiable? The drug problem might be considered here. Additionally, if death removes our humanity are we also less human if we are doped up with painkillers (can we function normally in that state?).

These arguments are all well and good when we are in sound health. It is very difficult to understand the nature of pain and suffering, if we have not experienced it and we will find that our attitudes change when we do. There is a need for a close watch on the Doctor, Patient communication (diagnosis are not infallible) and the patient must have the ultimate say on the limit of medication.

We are often fighting losing battles medically because the treatment which aims at restoring cannot get to the root of the problem of disease and at times we might appear to fight God.

I do not consider euthanasia justified by healthy people who draw a bullet instead of a pension! Life is to be served for God and the neighbour not for self. That said, if euthanasia was the relief of suffering and our temporal ignorance, I would not personally condemn the individual.

It is easy to pontificate on the evil of 'this and that' until a real situation arises. I trust that at least if you disagree, you will have given some consideration to the issue, God forbid that it should be your choice.

Sometimes we are more merciful to our sick animals than we are to relieve the suffering of our sick fellow man.



## The 5<sup>th</sup> COMMAND

***Exo 20:12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.***

This Command, the apostle Paul observes is the first to bring a promise with it. *Eph 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)* Here is the Commandment which I think heads the second table of the law. *Mat 22:36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?* This shows us the law is as one. The commands are summed up in two heads, love to God and love to neighbour. The first four laws of Exodus 20 have specific duties to God and the remaining six are duties to men. Obedience to the temporal law side will fit us to understand and fulfil more diligently the spiritual laws directed to God. There are some obvious parallels in the tables. The first starts with the supremacy of Jehovah, the second with the authority of temporal parents.

Let us ask ourselves some questions concerning this 5<sup>th</sup> Command. What is a mother and father? What is honour? What is the scope of this law? We shall endeavour to answer these because it will enable us to obey the command.

### Family

Firstly however, we are presented with two sources of information concerning the family. The derived autonomous view of humanism and the Divine revelation and the two are not compatible. For those who want to “duck” the issues of organic evolution, they must bypass this 5<sup>th</sup> Command.

As a contrast with the Divine revelation I am putting the views of Friedrich Engels, which I shall attempt to refute (origin of family, private, property and State – in *Select Works* 1884). Its initial premise is organic and social evolution. Its material heavily drawn from Greek history and myth and “social fossils” (groups of people who exist today, who stepped off the train of progress). The presumption further is that societies were sexually promiscuous because no cult law was initially evolved (i.e. like animals). This presented to a developing society the problem of establishing paternity for inheritance, so the society was presumed to be matriarchal i.e. the mother rights. She might have gone with so many men that the father was unknown, but the mother was not.

The group relations were modified by economics and so as the male had control of good the father right came into existence (still in a polygamous or polyandrous society). Monogamy, Engels argues (p485) was introduced by women who in increasing populations were getting the hard bargain as group property. Men he argues have always, up to the present day enjoyed promiscuity, far more than the women.

This presumption of forward progress in society advancing from lower to higher order is a religious supposition (temporal development has set many nations back into barbarism). It is a question of standards.

It of course comes out that if the group sex was the original order, the imposition of religious structures was wrong. Under the communist system the abolition of property removes the need for paternity to safeguard inheritance (male dominance is removed). Woman is liberated to indulge in the freedom of sex love. What of the children? They are state owned or as he says “society takes care of all children equally irrespective of whether they are born in wedlock or not” page 503. Restitution and monogamy disappear into the abyss.

The term family is from the word for house (famulus was a household slave) and it appears to imply a collective unity. Where from? *Gen 2:21 And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; Gen 2:22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. Gen 2:23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. Gen 2:25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

1. Order. Man, woman, offspring. The future pattern is based on the “therefore” of the manner of creation. The dependence upon parents now becomes after marriage another ordered unit with the wife. Verse 24 is spoken by God not Adam. *Mat 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female.*

This is very plainly, by design, a monogamous relationship and is so from the created order of God. Marriage carries in it the memorial of the creation.

This link is in the Bible clearly not just moral, but physical. It is not a cultural development, it is the foundation and here is our conflict with humanism (in which any random system may grow).

What shall we say to the humanist ‘evidences’ of different societies? They are mutations and corruption as a result of God’s judgement. *Rom 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Rom 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, Rom 1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Rom 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Rom 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. Rom 1:26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: Rom 1:27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet. Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Rom 1:29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers.*

History is in one sense the formative evidence of human depravity as it multiplies and the evidence of sin. *Gen 6:3 And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. Gen 6:4 There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown. Gen 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. Gen 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.*

Progress has been retrogressive.

The Bible “family” develops into a patriarchal society (father rule not mother) and hence the Nation State from Abraham onward establishes the historic paternity for Israel. *Rom 4:1 What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?*

It is clear then that the Bible teaches non promiscuous origins, Father dominance, Parental responsibility and monogamy in direct contradiction of humanist communism, initially non-economically regulated.

Now let us return to the first question. What is a father? From the Bible it is clearly not always the person who inseminates the mother. The father can be clearly revealed as a modal concept, aesthetic fatherhood. *Gen 4:21 And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.*

*Luk 2:41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. Luk 2:42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. Luk 2:43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. Luk 2:44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. Luk 2:45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. Luk 2:46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. Luk 2:47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. Luk 2:48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. Luk 2:49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*

This is further revelation particularly as it deals with Christ (His life clarifies so many truths). The parents (pario = produce) have mother and father status over Christ (judicial), God has the Fatherhood of faith (the origin of duty and purpose). It is clear that Joseph is not the biotic (organic) father of Christ (because that would nullify the virgin birth). Joseph has as it were adopted Jesus.

Christ's concept of family is not just one of temporal organic links, i.e. family by faith. *Mar 3:32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. Mar 3:33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? Mar 3:34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! Mar 3:35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.*

*Heb 12:9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? Temporal and spiritual Fatherhood.*

*Mat 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Mat 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Mat 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread. Mat 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Mat 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. Mat 6:14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive*

you: *Mat 6:15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* Fatherhood embraces: Honour, law, providence, compassion and mercy – these are the qualities of fatherhood.

You may have a spiritual father among men or be offspring of the devil. *1Co 4:15 For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Joh 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

Here of course we do not encourage the devils children to honour him! Clearly the 5<sup>th</sup> Command has limits. Tribute to whom it is due.

*1Jn 2:13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.* This might refer to seniority of fatherhood.

I trust this has made a point. A father is one who has authority over a particular sphere of existence or one who is the originator of certain actions. Clearly no man is entitled to be “father” in terms of creation or origin of religion, but the father is a legitimate title of other spheres. *Mat 23:7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. Mat 23:8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. Mat 23:9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.*

Now the father and mother may be much more than your biological precedents and I shall reflect this in the 5<sup>th</sup> Command. We have its inspiration from God.

More has been revealed in the wisdom of God by stating “honour your father..” than in just setting forth the command “wives honour your husband”. In doing it this way, God has linked generations that are not coherent into a structure and has embrace the marriage order and all other societal orders in it.

If we limited father and mother to the “begetters” who is the father of the children of a woman who remarries? Who gains custody of the children? Clearly our much broader approach covers other issues as well.

I conclude that the 5<sup>th</sup> Command has specific regard for temporal order in and out of the family. *Eph 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Eph 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;*

The order of redemption will finally culminate in the full establishment of the Fatherhood of God over all creation. *1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 1Co 15:23 But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. 1Co 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 1Co 15:25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 1Co 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

The temporal reality in which we live came into existence by a Father and by redemption in Christ. Through the application of the law structure of forgiveness, the Fatherhood of God will reassert itself.

All temporal fatherhoods should reflect the Divine and in that group which represent God on earth, the highest office (Eldership) or calling if you prefer it is, a cameo of that created order. *1Ti 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 1Ti 3:3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 1Ti 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 1Ti 3:5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 1Ti 3:6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

### Honour

The concept is that Fatherhood and Motherhood are deserving of honour. I shall endeavour to piece together the semantics of this and to delineate the boundaries of honour. This commandment does not just make a demand on “children”, it makes a demand on the parents to be something worthy of honour. Too much of this truth is directed at children and too little at the parents. May I respectfully express this in a different way? “Father and Mother, be objects worthy of honour before your children!

In the Decalogue the command as it stands, without case law, is almost meaningless, so we develop our understanding by the revelation surrounding the precept. The 104<sup>th</sup> question of the Heidelberg catechism is the basis of our investigation now. What does God require in the 5<sup>th</sup> Command? (for excellent detail read The Triple Knowledge Vol 3 p 274. H Hoeksema).

Answer: That I show all honour, love and fidelity, to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand.

Let us first see what we can determine from the language. The word honour (כָּבֹד = kâbad) has a number of meanings, to be heavy, to prevail, to harden, to save, to be burdensome, honour, to glorify, be noble, to abound, to be grievous, to be great, which is confusing! Are we to be hardened to our mother and father? Are we to grieve to our father and mother?

Here Leviticus guides our thought. The idea is of reverence or fear (יָרָא = yârê'), *Lev 19:3 Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the LORD your God. Deu 10:20 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.* The Command is therefore directing us to show respect and honour to authority and submit ourselves to it. This settles the sense of ‘cavod’, It is honour out of fear (i.e. respect).

*Mar 7:9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Mar 7:10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: Mar 7:11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. Mar 7:12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Mar 7:13 Making*

*the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.* This is a commentary by Jesus on the OT precept illustrating its practical significance.

Firstly honour is contrasted with abusing or evil speaking towards parents. (I presume at this stage the parental conduct is without reproach). Secondly the abuse of the Pharisees positively withdrew substance and honour from the parents supposedly “in the service of God”. This deceit was used in the name of God to avoid duty.

That duty is primarily to our heavenly Father. *Luk 14:18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. Luk 14:19 And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. Luk 14:20 And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.* This is an attempt here to abuse the OT law of war. *Deu 24:5 When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.*

There is a statute of limitations on parental rights, which must give way to the rights that God owns. *Mat 19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.* Does not this imply parental neglect? Not at all but it is a test of loyalty and anyone who puts parents above Christ is in breach of the fifth Command.

We question just what is ‘rendering to God’? The law of “vows” informs us. *Num 30:12 But if her husband hath utterly made them void on the day he heard them; then whatsoever proceeded out of her lips concerning her vows, or concerning the bond of her soul, shall not stand: her husband hath made them void; and the LORD shall forgive her. Num 30:13 Every vow, and every binding oath to afflict the soul, her husband may establish it, or her husband may make it void.* This shows God does relax His rights but it is not a ‘blanket’ ruling such that the husband may override His Creator on every occasion, it is limited to vows

So God does not accept Corban (gifts) as an end in itself, particularly where a needy person is deprived. This is the great difference between Jehovah and the heathen deities. Jehovah mercifully accommodated the poor according to their means. If a man could not afford a sheep for sacrifice, a dove would do. The sacrifice of the heart magnified the dove before God. The dove became a sheep, or perhaps more truly it became Christ.

In Mark’s Gospel Jesus condemns the Pharisaic attitude to the law. He shows that honour consists in respect, and giving where required, of the substance of a man (which is a very low level of subsistence. *Mar 7:12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;*

### Honour and love

You will note that the Command does not say “love” your mother and father. It certainly implies that as a summary of the law. *Lev 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.* But in stressing honour it shows us the ethical cost of that love, that is, its spiritual nature. Honour is a love springing out of respect, not a love for one’s own flesh, not a love of convenience, not a cupboard love. This is the love that Christ questions Peter about. *Joh 21:15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter,*

*Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.* This causes much consternation to the Saint, who can summon attachment, fondness (φιλέω = phileō) yet does not immediately aspire to true love (ἀγαπάω = agapaō).

### The boundaries of honour

What are the boundaries of this respect? What is it in a person that is to be observed as honourable? I want to link up with the wider scope of this law to include the social orders that are enclosed by it. Husbands/Wives. Parents/Children. Masters/Servants. In Paul's exposition we see the qualities of honour in their dynamic, practical form. *Eph 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.....Eph 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Eph 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) Eph 6:3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. Eph 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Eph 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Eph 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; Eph 6:7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Eph 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Eph 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.*

It is quite clear that human relationships are not all one sided. They have action and reaction such that there is tension holding people together. This is what causes a stable relationship, a bond of peace. The forces of attraction are present,. *Eph 4:3 Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* Like ropes pulling together to keep a post upright, any imbalance destroys the peace or equilibrium and the structure will collapse.

In the relationship with husbands and wives, honour is not specifically stated. *1Pe 3:7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving **honour unto the wife**, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.* The wife for her part must be subject (after the pattern of the Church) to Christ. It is not subject to tyranny! It is not a cowering fear, a dictatorship of coercion, but a voluntary, loving submission to righteousness and order. The husband as part of his honour must respond with a pastoral care. The response and reaction is tenderly illustrated in Song of Solomon.

*Son 1:9 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Son 1:10 Thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold. Son 1:11 We will make thee borders of gold with studs of silver. Son 1:12 While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof. Son 1:13 A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts. Son 1:14 My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi.*

If the husband does not fulfil his duty to the wife, and she continues to submit she will be bowed down to the ground in dishonour. Her giving expects a response, otherwise she will be submitting to tyranny. *1Co 7:15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.* This shows that dereliction of duty breaks a relationship and is often referred to as "the Pauline exclusion clause". If the wife does not fulfil her

duty to the husband, yet he continues to give (nourish and cherish) he will become a weak and pandering man, in turn causing his wife to be his demanding and spoilt idol.

In the first case the woman yielded her strength, in the second case the man his, for a relationship dishonouring to God. Dishonouring because the gracious correctives to the attitudes and works of the flesh were not applied. Adam had a duty to resist Eve, to serve God. He did not and incurred the wrath of God. *Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.* That is how sin entered, because the order and tension in relationships was destroyed. Peace was taken away.

In these examples of duty in Ephesians, Paul works from the least to the greater and gives the requirements of both parties. We often have too much emphasis the greater. Let us see that children are not to usurp control or dictate to adults (as if a king should be ordered by his servants). The tyranny of labourers who claim the right to be masters, in the union mentality of coercion, is rebellion to God. It is quite clear that God has given husbands, parents, masters a social status, governed by law, yet not to be a tyranny. If they truly observe God's order they will be loving those charges under them. If not they will be bullies, dictators, slavers and monsters. As they serve in a right manner, they have the right to expect a good and honest response from those under them, to fulfil duties given. If however, a parent bullies and demands of a child, things that are unrighteous, that child has the right to resist. To serve a parent in sin, is to become an accomplice to sin. A parent with no honour cannot be honoured

Surely the Jewish rulers were to be obeyed? *Act 4:19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.* No, not at the expense of God's truth. Should not Paul have been more submissive to the Roman rulers? *Act 16:37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.* No, because they were incompetent and dishonourable and they knew if they were found out, they could be punished.

Were not the three young men duty bound to serve their king? *Dan 3:16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. Dan 3:17 If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. Dan 3:18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.* No, the pagan cannot overrule the demands of Jehovah.

Was Abigail dishonouring her husband to save her servants? *1Sa 25:19 And she said unto her servants, Go on before me; behold, I come after you. But she told not her husband Nabal. 1Sa 25:23 And when Abigail saw David, she hasted, and lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, 1Sa 25:24 And fell at his feet, and said, Upon me, my lord, upon me let this iniquity be: and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid. 1Sa 25:25 Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial, even Nabal: for as his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him: but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send.* Her wisdom saved her servants but her greedy husband deserved no honour.



We might extend this list but the point is that God is showing us a social order and has based it upon certain moral requirements. To deface the morality is to deface the relationship. Israel had an outward compliance that was sinful, *Isa 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of me.* This outward is not enough. The law requires an inward compliance and the highest allegiance is to the law of God. *Isa 29:14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.*

This is what makes possible our 'honouring' and we can honour because God has shown us what is honourable. He in giving us the Holy Laws has lit up the way for our feet to walk in them.

The child must honour the parent in righteousness and the parent must be an example of godliness and wisdom. The parent is to be a type of God. A picture of Divine virtue and the child will then begin to see the unseen Jehovah, in the life of the parent. Thus Christ is manifested in the flesh as our own Father. *Col 1:19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.* To see Christ is to see the Father. Likewise in the family to see the parent is to see the Father in Heaven. This will magnify and glorify God.

#### The boundaries of possession

What are the boundaries of property, the priesthood of believers, church and family? (Read 1 Peter 2:13 to 3:22, *1Pe 2:13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; etc.,*)

We have looked at the structure of human relationship in terms of honour. *Eph 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.* There are in all relationships obligations and sanctions or punishments for disobeying.

The practical understanding of honour as opposed to the structure of relations in the world is given to us by Peter. It may at first sight appear that Peter is contradicting many of our previous ideas. *1Pe 2:13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme.* This does not teach a form of pacifism and his ideas do not condemn Paul's intransigence to his rulers or even Christ before Pilate?

There are key phrases which show Peter's position as he use phrases such as "the Lord's sake", "will of God", "conscience before God", "in the sight of God". Peter is looking at the Command to honour differently to Paul in Ephesians. He has gone inside the man and is applying practical principles. Submission is for the Lord's sake, because God wants it and it is because there is an overriding providence, that God is present in every act of creation and created order.

The "Jews" fallaciously considered outsiders as outside of God. Here we are taught that God governs though men who may not be believers. It is thus "God's will" that we do good and accept the righteous rule of providence. Cyrus is an example of God's anointed (Messiah) outside of Israel.

As saints we are free and shall judge the world. *Gal 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. 1Co 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?* Freed

however not from obligations, but freed to serve. *Joh 8:32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Joh 8:33 They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Joh 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. Joh 8:35 And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. Joh 8:36 If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* We are free from the law of sin and human tradition, but under God we may yield our rights.

We are put under unbelievers as “God’s bondsmen”, yet our labour is to God. *Col 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.* And from God we receive and we serve from the heart not as outward only. The failure to do this can cause Christ’s teaching to be blasphemed. *1Ti 6:1 Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.*

So then being free we do not use our freedom as a disguise for evil because we are God’s servants. *Rom 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.* This shows us yielding to weakness in man’s conscience. Our strength in the gospel does not afflict the weak but comfort but it must also strengthen the conscience through knowledge.

Peter shows that God requires social order even among the unsaved. It may be basic order, but it springs from God’s providence. We exercise wisdom in our walk. *Col 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.* So as God’s work is not evil spoken. *Tit 2:5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.*

Our obligations are independent of the character of the ruler. This does not mean that we accept their deficiencies because all will answer to God. *Heb 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.* Or that we live in their evil ways having fellowship with them. *2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?* Good or bad they have rights of us and we are to obey without distinction. Because our God is watching, we should be encouraged in our walk.

We must accept righteous order but it does not mean that we should not improve the system through God’s wisdom (Joseph in Egypt, Daniel in Babylon) and institute the higher laws of God but we are never revolutionaries! Fear God – Honour the King. This raises an ethical issue which we can illustrate through the life of the Lutheran pastor Bonhoeffer.

In October 1940, Dietrich Bonhoeffer began work as an agent for Military Intelligence, supposedly using his ecumenical contacts to help the cause of the Reich. In reality, he used his contacts to spread information about the resistance movement. In trips to Italy, Switzerland, and Scandinavia, in 1941 and 1942, he informed them of resistance activities and tried, in turn, to gain foreign support for the German resistance.

Hans von Dohnányi, a resistance leader, put great hopes in Bonhoeffer’s foreign contacts, particularly in Bishop George Bell’s ability to carry messages to the high levels

of British government. In turn, Bonhoeffer tried to convince his foreign contacts that some Allied signal of support for the German conspiracy was crucial, since only this would convince the German military to move against Hitler.

The Allied governments greeted these peace feelers with distrust. The military members of the resistance wanted guarantees of German territorial integrity and of their own position as leaders of a post war Germany. Allied diplomats and leaders found this demand unacceptable, and never seriously considered support for a German coup. In January 1943, Churchill and Roosevelt announced that only the unconditional military defeat of Germany would eradicate Nazism.

Despite these rebuffs, the conspirators continued to plan Hitler's downfall. But, as prospects for an early coup dimmed, some also searched for ways to help the victims of Nazism. On September 5, 1941, all Jews in the Reich were ordered to wear the yellow star; the first deportations to the East from Berlin occurred on October 15. On October 17 or 18, Bonhoeffer and Friedrich Perels, a Confessing Church lawyer, wrote a memo giving details of these first deportations. The memo was sent to trusted German military officials in the hope that it might move them to action, as well as to ecumenical contacts and the US State Department.

In Dohnányi's office, a plan was conceived to get Jews out of Germany by giving them papers as foreign agents. The plan was not that far-fetched: in several cases, Nazi intelligence offices had used Jewish agents as a cover. There was also a steady underground business that helped Jews emigrate in exchange for large sums of money.

The Dohnanyi/Canaris effort, termed "Operation Seven," eventually spirited fourteen Jews out to Switzerland (eleven had converted to Christianity; three had not). Bonhoeffer used his ecumenical contacts to arrange visas and sponsors for the group. At his instigation, one of those rescued was Charlotte Friedenthal, who had worked with Marga Meusel and with the Grüber office.

Friedenthal reached Switzerland in August 1942; the others arrived in September. Dohnanyi's office immediately began plans for a new rescue attempt; before anything could come of these, the Gestapo traced the vast amounts of money that the conspirators had sent abroad for the emigrants. The arrests of Dohnanyi and Bonhoeffer followed in April 1943.

Initially, the Gestapo treated it as a corruption case, accusing Dohnanyi and his colleagues of lining their own pockets. They soon realized, however, that the rescue attempt was the tip of a larger iceberg. Bonhoeffer was charged with conspiring to rescue Jews; of using his travels abroad for non-intelligence matters; and of misusing his intelligence position to keep Confessing Church pastors out of the military and for his own ecumenical work.

The Gestapo report on Bonhoeffer described him as "completely in the opposition." Still, even after the failure of the July 20, 1944, attempt to kill Hitler, it was months before the Nazis realized the extent of Bonhoeffer's involvement in resistance circles.

In October 1944, Bonhoeffer was moved to the dreaded Gestapo prison in Berlin; in February 1945, he was taken to Buchenwald. He was then moved to the Flossenbürg concentration camp where, on April 9, he was hanged, together with Canaris, Oster, and other conspirators. Hans von Dohnanyi and Klaus Bonhoeffer were executed days later. The SS doctor who witnessed Bonhoeffer's death later recalled a man "devout . . . brave and composed. His death ensued after a few seconds . . . I have hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God." Bonhoeffer sent one final message, to George Bell in England: "This is the end, for me the beginning of life."

There are two threads in this story of Bonhoeffer. The humanitarian aspect of rescuing persecuted Jews and the attempt to overthrow the Government of the Third Reich. We get the rulers we deserve and God gives them to us. Do we then have a right to overthrow them because in doing so we are rebelling against God? We may say that some regimes are so evil that we must do something but I question whether that 'something' is to rebel against the government set up by the providence of God. We do not see Daniel and his companions attempting to overthrow king Nebuchadnezzar but they will certainly question his right to impose idolatry upon them.

We may suffer because we conflict morally with governments but that is to be expected. While Jesus did not encourage a violent overthrow of the Jewish nation or the Roman Empire, He was critical of the religious hierarchy and their hypocrisy. We must also remember where we stand in this world and that is we are not "of it" and we are citizens of another Kingdom.

It is our conscience of God, our knowledge of God that enables us to endure. There are times to act and times to withhold. The individual must be assured he is acting in the knowledge of God, not out of self interest. Thus we may at times endure or at others resist. We may submit to captivity or resist oppression. Let us be sure we act in the knowledge of God – for conscience of God.

#### Covenant companions

*Mal 2:14 Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.*

Marriage is another institution where honour is a key component. As I wrote this today (May 2016) a news item suggested "Fifth of UK couples close to break-up":

Researchers looked at data from the Understanding Society survey of 20,980 people, which asked people how often they argued, how frequently they considered divorce and regretted their relationship, and the extent of their unhappiness. They said their findings suggested 2.87 million people, which equates to 18% of married or cohabiting couples, were living in "distressed" relationships, where the strains were deemed to be "clinically significant" by counsellors.

The number of "distressed" relationships reached a high in 2011 and 2012 but have not yet returned to pre-recession levels, the data showed. "There is a pattern of relationship strain increasing during recession years - where economic strain increases, for example low income, unemployment, a build-up of debt, the strain on the relationship increases," Dr Marjoribanks said.

The research also found:

- One in 10 partners reported at least occasionally, regretting getting married or living together, while 9% said they at least occasionally considered divorce or separation
- Nearly half (49%) of partners reported at least occasionally quarrelling, with 6.8% reporting severe levels
- Parents of children under 16 were slightly more likely to be in distressed relationships (22%), and becoming a parent for the first time was "one of life's events most likely to reduce relationship quality"

Dr Marjoribanks said many couples suffered in silence for years and only sought help when it was too late to salvage their relationship. Jan Artingstall from Therapy Cheshire, who is listed in the Counselling Directory, believes people today spend so much time communicating via text and social media that they have forgotten how to talk.

We are living in an age of virtual relationships where failure to communicate leads to a failure to resolve issues. The news item gave an example, although it is not about Christians:

It may have seemed a small thing but Sophie\*, 28, knew her marriage was over when she came home from work to have lunch with her out-of-work husband and he expected her to make it.

Things had not been right for some time. There had been arguments about money, jobs and housework shortly after the wedding, often in front of their young son. But soon communication shut down almost entirely as both felt the arguments were always the same and nothing would ever change.

Days would go by with neither of them talking to each other. They tried counselling but it came at a cost and they found themselves forced to choose between a counselling session or buying food for the week. In January last year, after three years of marriage, Sophie told her husband, 41, it was over.

There was a lack of respect and lack of care such that the wife could see nothing to honour in the husband.

Marital submission is treated by Peter with the same pattern of God to the fore. Like Paul it is to be fitting in the Lord. *Col 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

The way to a husband (believer or unbeliever)) is according to God, not through the belly or his eyes as a carnal encounter. This doesn't mean a woman should be a drudge and careless about her cooking and appearance. Rather it shows where she should start. The woman is not to win the man by the flesh, by dressing up the body. She should make her soul the attractive jewel the man will earnestly desire. Dressing not in front of men as the worlds women do, but in the sight of the Lord.

After all the best service she can render her husband is to encourage him in the kingdom of God as a true helpmeet. This does not mean jewels or neat smart clothes are wrong but again not a question

of eye service – but conduct before God. *Col 3:22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God.*

Peter also states that unbelievers or disobedient husbands still have “rights” in God’s eyes. This does not mean that by upholding the unbeliever’s rights God is condoning their unbelieving actions. The law of God benefits all men. By this a woman becomes a daughter of Sarah (as we are sons of Abraham). She called her husband Lord. *Gen 18:12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?* Notice she spoke within herself. This shows her habit, her natural reaction to Abraham. It was for Sarah a way of life not a choice phrase to show outward conformity for the sake of others.

So women then are to take trouble daily to stand before the mirror of God’s word adorning themselves in true holiness as others might put makeup on. The husband must dwell according to knowledge. This is with understanding, understanding the frailty of woman.

The consequence of a failure to do this is that your prayers will be hindered. Lack of order leads to a wall between you and God. Leave your gifts at the altar, because like the Pharisee you will pray only to yourself. Unity is one of the essences of successful prayer, it applies no less to the assembly than man and wife.

Peter then has shown us much practical substance to aid us in respecting others rights (to property, service, honour) and briefly I summarise.

1. Do all as before God, conscious of His oversight and you in His presence. The eyes of the Lord are in every place.
2. Liberty has to be used honourably to glorify God not to stumble man, woman, child etc.
3. Believers and unbelievers may have equal claim upon our service and we are to make no distinction, because we act before God, unto Christ.
4. Christ is our example of suffering according to God’s will.
5. We work to win souls by our conduct not by looks. To this end we are first to be conscious of dressing up before God.
6. The failure of knowledge and order will hinder the Divine communication. Strive to gain personal conviction of duty before God.

These points I think are practical aspects of the Fifth Command to HONOUR.

## The 4<sup>th</sup> COMMAND

*Exo 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Exo 20:9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: Exo 20:10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: Exo 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

### Origin of the Sabbath

The Sabbath is revealed in the Decalogue as a memorial of the Creation and creative works of God. That is not all that it is but we shall start there.

The testimony of Genesis is quite clear that the Universe came into being in 6 days and the Creator rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day. All sorts of theories have been put forward to try and reconcile the apparent geological and astronomical records with the idea of “days”. People invent “gaps”, they separate Genesis chapter one from Chapter two as two different accounts of Creation, they invent a “day” is an “age” theory, in short, anything to avoid the acceptance of a 24 hour day. All I can say is that if the day was an age, then the “evening and the morning” that formed the boundaries of the creation days must have been also epochs of darkness and light.

A problem occurs in reconciling the day of rest, the Sabbath, with the seventh day of Creation. Now you could have had a “Sabbath” without explaining where it comes from. You could just have “*the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it*” and leave it at that. However, by introducing the statement, “*For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day:*” we are immediately challenged. If the “day” was an epoch, the “Sabbath” is an epoch, not 24 hours and that just does not make sense. The meaning of “day” would have changed within the sentence, without explanation or reason.

It is a similar logical inference to this, *1Co 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*. If Adam is not a man the analogy fails. What is Adam if he is not a man who brings death upon humanity, just as Christ is a man who brings life? Paul has no difficulty in accepting the literality of Adam, *1Co 15:45 And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit*. Luke records that the lineage of Christ can be traced back to this physical Adam.

### Word definition

The Sabbath was a day of rest. The ancient Babylonian calendar, as seen from recently recovered inscriptions on the bricks among the ruins of the royal palace, was based on the division of time into weeks of seven days. The Sabbath is in these inscriptions designated Sabattu, and defined as "a day of rest for the heart" and "a day of completion of labour." The origin of the Hebrew sabbat (שַׁבָּת = shabbâth) is uncertain, but it seems to have derived from the verb sabat, meaning to stop, to cease, or to keep. Its theological meaning is rooted in God's rest following the six days of creation.

We have seen that the Ten Commands are defined in case law and this shows us that the Sabbath far more than an observance of a weekly event. The concept of rest was applied to many other aspects of Hebrew life. *Lev 23:2 Speak to the sons of Israel, and you shall say to them, The appointed feasts of Jehovah which you shall proclaim, holy gatherings, shall be these: These are My appointed seasons:*

1. Weekly Sabbath. *Lev 23:3 Work is to be done six days, and in the seventh day shall be a sabbath of rest, a holy gathering; you shall do no work; it is a sabbath to Jehovah in all your dwellings. LITV. Exo 23:12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.*
2. The seventh day of Passover week. *Lev 23:8 But ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD seven days: in the seventh day is an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein.*
3. Pentecost. *Lev 23:20 And the priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits for a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs: they shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. Lev 23:21 And ye shall proclaim on the selfsame day, that it may be an holy convocation unto you: ye shall do no servile work therein: it shall be a statute for ever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.*
4. Trumpets. *Lev 23:24 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Lev 23:25 Ye shall do no servile work therein: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.*
5. Atonement. *Lev 23:27 Also on the tenth day of this seventh month there shall be a day of atonement: it shall be an holy convocation unto you; and ye shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Lev 23:28 And ye shall do no work in that same day: for it is a day of atonement, to make an atonement for you before the LORD your God.*
6. Tabernacles or Booths. *Lev 23:34 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD. Lev 23:35 On the first day shall be an holy convocation: ye shall do no servile work therein..... Lev 23:39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. Lev 23:40 And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days. Lev 23:41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.*
7. Land Sabbath. *Exo 23:10 And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof: Exo 23:11 But the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat: and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy oliveyard.*
8. Law Reading. *Deu 31:10 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, Deu 31:11 When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.*
9. The seventh year of release (rest from servitude). *Deu 15:9 Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.*
10. Jubilee. *Lev 25:8 And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Lev 25:9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh*



*month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. Lev 25:10 And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.*

You will observe that the Babylonian captivity came about because of the failure to observe the Land Sabbath. *2Ch 36:20 And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia: 2Ch 36:21 To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.*

This raises an issue that if Sabbath keeping is so important to many Christians, the consequences of breaking any of the Sabbaths, not just the weekly Sabbath, is severe. This goes for the Sabbath of release.

Jeremiah who foretold the 70 years also showed that they failed to observe the year of release and reneged on a promise. *Jer 34:13 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondmen, saying, Jer 34:14 **At the end of seven years** let ye go every man his brother an Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee: but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear. Jer 34:15 And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty every man to his neighbour; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name: Jer 34:16 But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids. Jer 34:17 Therefore thus saith the LORD; **Ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbour:** behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the LORD, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine; and **I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.***

There was a lot more encapsulated in the idea of Sabbath and it is not just limited to a weekly observance.

#### [The day of rest](#)

Just what did the Israelites do on the Sabbath? *Exo 16:29 See, for that the LORD hath given you the sabbath, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day.* It was a day of **rest at home**. I mention this because Sabbath has been developed into an idea involving corporate worship, Sabbath meeting, Sabbath schools and so on.

There were corporate meetings, *Exo 23:14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. Exo 23:15 Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) Exo 23:16 And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field. Exo 23:17 Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.* The weekly Sabbath was different.

The Sabbath was a blessed day to rest in all of the creative works of the Maker at home. Many Christians apply the term Sabbath to Sunday as a day of worship but we do not find the Sabbath used for congregational meetings week upon week. It was a time of rest at home where an individual could develop his personal relationship with His God. It was a Holy day, sanctified, separated from the other days of man's labours. When Sabbath was introduced, there were no synagogues or worship places other than the Tabernacle, so what you did was very much up to the head of the house. Today it has been changed to become the preserve of church leaders and to top it all, they have even changed the day to a Sunday. Yet like all who notionally follow the Law of Moses, they will not apply the sanctions of Moses (death) and so is revealed the hypocrisy of their position. The other Sabbaths are of course buried completely.

Gary North (Appendix: The economics of Sabbath keeping. Institutes of Biblical Law. R J Rushdoony) makes a good observation about the inconsistencies of Sabbath keeping:

Naturally, the Monday morning Sabbatarian quarterbacks who at least enjoy reading about the Packers-Browns game, even though it is immoral to watch it or play it, resent the rigor of their fellow Sabbatharians who refuse to read the Monday afternoon account of it (the morning edition, as I have already mentioned, goes unread). They think of the others as legalists, while extremists who follow the implications of their position naturally view their weaker brethren as latent antinomians.

Such is the way of men: he who resents getting his toes stepped on calls his brother a legalist; he who delights in stepping resents all others obvious inconsistency. It is too often a question of whose ox is getting gored (or, to fulfil the analogy, whose ox has fallen into what ditch)

Some 40 years ago, I engaged in a correspondence with the Lord's Day Observance Society (LDOS). It was about the origin of the use of "Lord's Day" for Sunday and how that was also called the Sabbath. The General Secretary held,

"...that the Lord's Day is the day we remember the Lord's resurrection and the Scripture clearly teach us that the resurrection took place on the first day of the week – being our Sunday – thus changing from the Jewish Sabbath, which was the Saturday (sic)".

So here was their argument. The Lord's Day is a memorial of the resurrection and somehow, the Jewish Sabbath (a Saturday) now becomes a Sunday. This was the problem I had. There was not one scripture advanced to show the Church in the time of the Apostles had a "Lord's Day". There was not one scripture advanced to show that the Apostles relocated the Jewish Sabbath from Saturday, to a Christian Sunday (or that its commencement had changed from sunset to midnight).

The only biblical use of "Lord's Day" is in John's Apocalypse. There is no evidence of any kind that "the first day of the week" was ever called "the Lord's Day" before the Apocalypse was written. As someone observed, **"It is incredible that the earliest use of a term can have a meaning which only subsequent usage makes intelligible"**. That is what the LDOS were doing, they were interpreting the meaning of "Lord's Day" not from its use in scripture, but from the meaning it gained by later usage. The cart was pulling the horse.

Not worth bothering about you might say, a waste of time on something that doesn't edify? I do not agree. God says what He means and means what He says. His word is definitive for faith and life. If it was important enough to write, it is important enough for us to understand. So what is the "Lord's day"? The only time that this term is used it is in the Revelation of Jesus, *Rev 1:10 I was in Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet*. Is John saying that he was "in Spirit" on a Sunday or does it mean something else? It adds nothing to our understanding to say that John received this Revelation on a Sunday. What would that contribute? Does a Revelation only happen on a Sunday?

The only comparable term with "The Lord's Day" is "The day of the Lord". *2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up*. Also *1Th 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 1Th 5:2 For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 1Th 5:3 For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape*.

Now I am not certain that the terms ("Day of the Lord" and "Lord's day") are exactly the same, although they are in part linked by the fact of judgement. Let me explain. Paul writes to the brothers in Corinth, who it seems have been questioning Paul's stewardship. Paul is more concerned that he is right before God and that his praise is from God than that it comes from man. In short he doesn't care what the Corinthians think of him or how they judge him and he makes this statement.

*1Co 4:3 and to me it is for a very little thing that by you I may be judged, or by man's day, but not even myself do I judge, YLT*. In the context of....*1Co 4:5 so, then, nothing before the time judge ye, till the Lord may come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of the darkness, and will manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then the praise shall come to each from God*. Rather than translate the original word as "day" (man's day), some have decided to interpret it as "judgement", as the AV does, *1Co 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self*.

They incorrectly translate the text as "man's judgement" rather than "man's day". The original word is "day" not "judgement". It definitely loses some of the sense because Paul is saying that it is of little matter to him whether he is judged by the Corinthians or judged by mankind (man's day). This age in which we live is "man's day" and a day under man's judgement. We might then contrast this "man's day" with the day that is the "Lord's day". As "mans day" is associated with the judgements of man, the "Lord's day" is associated with the judgements of God. Not I would suggest, events that occur on just one day (Sunday) but judgements that occur throughout history.

Let us leave the term Sabbath in all its OT glory fully established by its case law of the OT, without any change as to its meaning or observance. What we shall see, is that the OT was not the last word on its case law and that it develops further.

### The everlasting Sabbath

Hebrew chapter 4 shows that the Jewish Sabbaths were not the rest of God but preparatory to it. Exodus chapter 20 is preparatory to the “eternal rest of God” prepared for us and in a sense parallels the Kingdom of God which a man “must enter” into, sanctified at last. *Eze 20:12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.*

The continuation of the Jewish 7<sup>th</sup> day as the Sabbath in the NT is the failure to acknowledge the rest in Christ to come. The Sabbath as a type is more important than the anti-type, Christ. We consider the following in this respect:

1. The law is the revelation of moral perfections that lead us to Christ. The Sabbath did not exist before Sinai as part of a national covenant. Whether men observed it or not is unclear. The outward obedience to the 4<sup>th</sup> Command was to teach man to enter “the heart rest of God”. Christ is that rest, *Heb 4:8 For if Joshua gave them rest, then He would not have afterwards spoken about another day. Heb 4:9 So, then, there remains a sabbath rest to the people of God. Heb 4:10 For he entering into His rest, he himself also rested from his works, as God had rested from His own. Heb 4:11 Therefore, let us exert ourselves to enter into that rest, that not anyone fall in the same example of disobedience.* LITV.

Christ was portrayed by the weekly observation but we now have a better example. While we still look forward to the “rest of God” we do not heed the shadow of Sinai, having the “body” itself.

2. *Mat 12:8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.* Does it imply that those in Christ keep the weekly Sabbath, if they are in Him?

*Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.* The Revelation of Christ is the reason for even greater condemnation to those who neglect of the Sabbath Lord.

There are further parallels, such as the OT saints entering Canaan and the NT saints entering glory. Both had the gospel (evangel). *Heb 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.*

3. In OT. The good news and failure. The good news of a promised land. *Exo 6:7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. Exo 6:8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.*

The consequences of failure. *Num 14:26 And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Num 14:27 How long shall I bear with this evil congregation, which murmur against me? I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Num 14:28 Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the LORD, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: Num 14:29 Your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me, Num 14:30 Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I swore to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.*

4. In the NT. the good news. The OT sets forth a warning. *Heb 3:17 But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness? The 'rest' is only for the faithful. Heb 4:3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

In the “many parts and many ways” of God, Canaan is a symbol of God’s rest, a temporal revelation, to exhibit the Divine antitype. The principle of ‘rest’ was not inactivity, but peace. The ultimate rest is the ‘Sabbatism’ of God. *Heb 4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest (σαββατισμός = sabbatismos) to the people of God.* It remains for the Christian to strive to enter into it and this was the ‘rest’ that formed the heavenly pattern for the Sinaitic covenant.

There is no conflict with Deuteronomy which looks at the “rest of God” from a different angle. *Deu 5:12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Deu 5:13 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: Deu 5:14 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. Deu 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.*

**1<sup>st</sup> conclusion.** The Jewish weekly Sabbath was based upon heavenly rest and consequently gave earthly rest, **not vice versa**. The basis of the Sabbath observance is not for physical, but spiritual benefit. It is a holy convocation. *Lev 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.*

The day of rest is a Divine concession, rest from labour, signified by the provision of “double manna” and failure to observe it was a capital offence. *Num 15:32 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. Num 15:33 And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. Num 15:34 And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. Num 15:35 And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. Num 15:36 And all the congregation brought him without the*

*camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses. Following this there was the giving of the blue tassel of the law. Num 15:37 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Num 15:38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: Num 15:39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring.*

Ezekiel sees that law keeping and Sabbath (plural) were coherent practices. Sabbath was the outward sign of a faithful people. *Eze 20:10 Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. Eze 20:11 And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Eze 20:12 Moreover also I gave them **my sabbaths**, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. Eze 20:13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.*

**2<sup>nd</sup> conclusion.** The principle of spiritual service in righteousness and not just physical recuperation are clearly God's reason for the Sabbath. Physical benefits are purely side effects. There is no evidence in the Bible of a Sabbath observance in the temporal sense before Sinai. It is not a creation ordinance because God gives it to man after the Exodus.

It would have been a sinful presumption for Adam to have copied God. We have no right to do many of the things God does. We have no right to forgive sins against God or claim on His behalf without permission. The person who argues 'creation ordinance' must answer the question of Isaiah. *Isa 1:12 When ye come to appear before me, **who hath required this at your hand**, to tread my courts?* Modern idolatry and witchcraft are the product of autonomy. *1Sa 15:22 And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.* The fall took away from man peace and actually took him out of the rest of God, barring him from it by a curse and a promise. *Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Gen 3:18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; Gen 3:19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*

By this, Adam had no right to take a day off. The earth wouldn't let him. So it becomes a great concession and a privilege to have a rest with God in Sinai. Notice meat eating was a concession after the flood, a growth in fellowship with God. For Adam to have taken upon himself to do what is not clearly requests is like an OT saint trying to live in the NT. He would have had to reject the mosaic laws – to his own destruction.

**3<sup>rd</sup> conclusion.** There is no evidence for a pre-mosaic Sabbath celebrated by man. In the NT we have the prospect of the true Sabbath in Christ, casting the OT ordinances (ceremonial) as shadows. The body is Christ's. *Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an*

*holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

As Christ is revealed as the 'true rest', to continue the OT ceremonial Sabbath observance is:

1. A presumption unfounded in scripture. To change the Saturday Sabbath to Sunday is likewise.
2. To argue for Sabbath as a temporal physical rest is contrary to its specification as spiritual.
3. To debase the work of Christ.
4. To Judaize.
5. To maintain the ordinance without its corresponding laws of punishment is a schismatic approach to OT. (Murray on 4<sup>th</sup> Command).

**4<sup>th</sup> conclusion.** There is no requirement for any Christian not to labour on a Sunday or any other day. Judaisers should thus be rebuked (for Galatianism).

The Sunday Observance Act 1780 chapter 49 21 Geo 3 was introduced as an Act for preventing certain Abuses and Profanations on the Lord's Day, called Sunday. "Whereas certain houses, rooms or places within the cities of London or Westminster or in the neighbourhood thereof have of late frequently been opened for publick entertainment or amusement upon the evening of the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday; and at other houses, rooms or places within the said cities or in the neighbourhood thereof, under pretence of enquiring into religious doctrines and explaining texts of Holy Scripture, debates have frequently been held on the evening of the Lord's Day concerning divers texts of Holy Scripture by persons unlearned and incompetent to explain the same, to the corruption of good morals, and to the great encouragement of irreligion and profaneness:"

The 1780's saw the rise of moral reform and the Introduction of Sunday schools by Robert Raikes. Without the influence of the Methodist<sup>22</sup> movement, the Industrial Revolution would not have caused the social change we see in Britain today. There are those that would say that without the church, and in this case largely the Methodist Church, Britain might have suffered a similar fate that France did during this period. An uprising of the working class in Britain, similar to the one in France, certainly would have changed history in ways that are difficult to contemplate.

Laws invoking the sanctity of Sunday had at their heart the welfare of the moral climate in a rapidly changing industrial world. The idea was good but as we know, the law does not of itself change the heart of a man, although it may expose him to perform his duty better. The Sabbath also in its original form was given to people who were in covenant with the Lord as part of a package of laws.

The Sabbath was at heart a time to be good and do good. *Luk 6:1 And it came to pass on **the second sabbath** after the first, that he went through the corn fields; and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. Luk 6:2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the sabbath days? Luk 6:3 And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungred, and they which were with him; Luk 6:4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also*

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<sup>22</sup> The Impact of Methodism on the Industrial Revolution in England. Bill Polson Union, Intermediate High School, Broken Arrow, OK. NEH Seminar 2006

to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? Luk 6:5 And he said unto them, That **the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath**. Luk 6:6 And it came to pass also **on another sabbath**, that he entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. Luk 6:7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him. Luk 6:8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Luk 6:9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? Luk 6:10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. Luk 6:11 And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

Let us charitably consider the Scribes and Pharisees point. I don't mean the ones necessarily here, but their fathers who handed it down. We get some idea of the complexity of their rules from Mishnah, Shabath (Danby, Oxford Ch7.4 page 106 on eating):

7.4. [He is culpable] that takes out straw equal to a cow's mouthful, or pea-stalks equal to a camel's mouthful, or ears of grain equal to a lamb's mouthful, or a dried fig's bulk of fresh garlic or onion leaves, or if dry, a kid's mouthful [thereof]. Etc, etc,

(op. cit. section 10.1 page 109 healing):

10.1. If a man stored up aught as seed, or as a sample, or as a means of healing, and he took it out on the Sabbath, he is culpable, however little the quantity; but any other becomes culpable thereby only if [he took out] the [forbidden quantity] thereof. Etc, etc.]

That is Pharisaism of a high order and it is easy to imagine the confusion that it sowed among the simple Jews. We can see our Lord cutting a furrow across their sacred field. Sabbath did everything but give joy or rest to the poor groaning under it. Even the cripple has a further burden on his wooden stumps on this day of the year (op. cit. page 105 section 6.8).

Yet I believe that many of these rules did spring up from a consideration of the law as it was taught! We have the same additive process going out today in many denominations. The teachings of the previous generations have become sacred rules and habits, unquestioned and almost co-equal in authority with Scripture. For example, the strict Baptist principles of communion, Sunday school, titles like 'Reverends', one man ministries etc. What then caused the attitude of the Jews? I think it lies in this:

Isaiah, speaking with the tongue of God castigates Israel. They are worse than animals, dumb like beasts. *Isa 1:3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.* They are like a rotting leper suppurating, stinking, cankered and dripping filth. *Isa 1:5 Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.* They are left deserted. *Isa 1:8 And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.* They are Sodom and Gomorrah, dens of vice, sodomy and whoredom. *Isa 1:10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of*



*Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. Rev 11:8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

As a result, sacrifices and offerings are in vain. *Isa 1:11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats.* This is the same tack as Jeremiah. *Jer 7:22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices.* Jeremiah points back to the basis of the covenant as being obedience rather than sacrifice. Thus festivals themselves were purposeless, they were vanity including the Sabbath. *Isa 1:13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.* Sabbath profanation is clearly linked into the law observance. *Eze 20:10 Wherefore I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness. Eze 20:11 And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them. Eze 20:12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. Eze 20:13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them. Eze 20:14 But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, in whose sight I brought them out. Eze 20:15 Yet also I lifted up my hand unto them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands; Eze 20:16 **Because they despised my judgments, and walked not in my statutes, but polluted my sabbaths:** for their heart went after their idols.* To break the Sabbath is to reject the law.

Stinging from the humiliation of the captivity, Nehemiah's little remnant have not forgotten the declamation of the prophets. The Sabbath must not be neglected. Nehemiah sees to that and if necessary with force. The 'wheeler dealers' found themselves on Calvary (outside the city) and possibly with Nehemiah's hand on their throats. *Neh 13:19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that **there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.** Neh 13:20 So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware **lodged without Jerusalem** once or twice.*

It is against the background of failure in the OT to keep law and Sabbath that I think the well meaning presumption began to fruit. If you could make a man keep the Sabbath you could therefore make him keep the law. This is the very point that makes it weak. Autonomous man cannot of himself keep the law.

A more careful reading of Isaiah 1 reveals that the "thou shalt" have become the "I will" of God. The failure to observe and obey was because the law was being done in the flesh. God promises the "I will" so characteristic of the Gospels. Here is Christ speaking. *Isa 1:24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, **I will ease** me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies: Isa 1:25 And **I will** turn my hand upon thee, and purely **purge** away thy dross, and take*

*away all thy tin. He will purge and restore. Compare with Luk 3:17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.*

Here is the route of the restored individual and it comes by God not man. *Eph 2:8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.* There was of course ample reason to fear the breaking of the law, but the methods of the Scribes and Pharisees became antinomian. Wherever the principles of Biblical law are lost, a dry legalism will seize and strangle spiritual life, and anti-nominianism will become ascendant.

### Sabbath in Genesis

It is necessary to go back to Genesis to examine the origin, progress and end of this law. *Gen 2:3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.* It is generally accepted in the first table of the law, that it is a primary duty to God and not to man. It is then a grievous presumption for man to assume a service to God because worship is directed by the Word. We do not derive the requirements of worship by self interrogation. We get them from God. As with eating meat, the silence as to whether man could or could not eat (early in Genesis) does not mean that he could copy God or share in the things of God at will! It pleased God to grant man permission to eat meat and the accompanying rules were laid out. *Gen 9:3 Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.* Likewise I suggest it would have been presumptuous of Adam to have taken a day off to copy God or to share with God. Indeed, to the contrary, the curse bought little respite for Adam. *Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.*

Work not rest was fallen man's lot. Hard labour, not a holiday camp was the prescription for sin. It pleased God to grant man a share in the rest from labour and that doesn't come for two thousand years and then to the nation in bondage. It serves then as a reminder of the great privilege. *Deu 5:11 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Deu 5:12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Deu 5:13 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: Deu 5:14 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. Deu 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.*

We observe that there is a pre-fulfilling of this in the Ark of Noah, whose very name means rest! Noah enjoyed a sabbatical year at God's hand, no ploughing or planting. What do you think he did for that year in the moments of freedom? The Ark prefigures the redeemed resting in Christ and as we shall see that is where the highest meaning is set for Sabbath.

### Rest and inactivity

How does God require a Sabbath? Does He get tired? No. This is the false concept of rest. Rest does not mean inactivity. *Joh 5:16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day. Joh 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.*

This conflict with the Jews shows again, the highest duties of the Sabbath include restoration, particularly illustrated with works of mercy, for example, saving the cow that had fallen in a hole. The 'rest' of God was the cessation from this special creation activity, the operation becoming one of providential maintenance, that is, the sustaining of laws introduced at creation. This may give us the link between Sabbath keeping and law keeping in the OT. *Eze 20:12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them. Eze 20:13 But the house of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly polluted: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.*

The end of the work of Christ on behalf of His people is for them to enter into the rest of God. *Heb 4:4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. Heb 4:5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Heb 4:6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Heb 4:7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Heb 4:8 For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. Heb 4:9 **There remaineth therefore a rest (σαββατισμός = sabbatismos) to the people of God.***

There remains a Sabbath, therefore we have not yet fully partaken of the eternal rest symbolised by the Sabbath. We have but the first fruits and the full harvest is yet to come. The 1<sup>st</sup> day is the true symbolism of the new creation in Jesus Christ terminating in the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

### Is Sabbath a Creation ordinance?

Accurate Biblical terminology does much to dispel a false doctrinal concept. The blending of terms such as Sabbath, Lords day, Sunday and first day of the week is dangerous for Christian practice. The Sabbath throughout the Scripture is never be equated with the 1st day of the week. *Mat 28:1 In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. Mar 16:1 And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. Mar 16:2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.*

Another concept that has been advanced is that the Sabbath, at creation, was an ordinance for man and practiced before the Exodus of the children of Israel. I suggest two guiding principles in examining this idea.

1. The Scripture (written) is a rule for "General" practice. This I think is the purpose of the writings. *Rom 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. 2Ti 3:16 All scripture is given by*

*inspiration (God breathed) of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 1Jn 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

The Christian faith in practice, is based upon positive direct statements, rather than on omissions or inferences. This attitude of “sticking” to scripture is called by some “legalism”. What merchant though would not be jealous to protect such treasure from theft and corruption? Let us just say to that cry of “legalist” that Christ commends it in Philadelphia. *Rev 3:8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.*

2. There is a need to be accurate in terminology, defining words from context in scripture. We may by error use a scriptural term in a non scriptural context (for example, Sabbath becomes equal to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week, is a prime example). This will eventually leave us to interpret scripture by our current use, rather than the Bible use. For example modern use of ‘Lord’s day’ retrospectively interprets biblical use of ‘Lord’s day’, *Rev 1:10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.*

The Westminster Confession is wrong when it states (Chapter 21:7):

As it is the law of nature, that, in general, a due proportion of time be set apart for the worship of God; so, in His Word, by a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment binding all men in all ages, he hath particularly appointed one day in seven, for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which, in Scripture, is called the Lord’s Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world, as the Christian Sabbath.

This is an abysmal piece of exegesis and an abuse of scripture. The scriptural references they quoted do not tie together.

I am not saying that we should not have non-biblical words (e.g. sphere laws, trinity, sovereignty or amillennialism). These can save time as short hand or composite containers of numerous thoughts, providing we have given them a Biblical base. Paul creates a word in the Greek language *Heb 4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.* Paul uses a word ‘Sabbatimos’ for ‘rest’ to express a concept already outlined. The point I make here is one of internal terminology. For example, Baptism, if defined Biblically, can never be applied to infants or men passively (without their consent). Sabbath law is equally confused, so let us then bearing these point in mind examine the case for a creation Sabbath ordinance.

If it can be put on a par with marriage, which is without question a creation ordinance, we must imply a general principle for all ages and times. Christ delivers to us the kingdom law from creation and the beginning was a pattern of the end. *Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. Mat 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. Mat 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication,*

*and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.*

We should be very careful in our examination of pre-Exodus law because Genesis contains a lot of it. Let us look at some.

1. **The priesthood** of the most high God given to Noah. *Gen 7:2 Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.*
2. **The Tithe** given by Abraham to Melchizedek. *Gen 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.*
3. **The clean and unclean.** *Gen 7:2 Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.*
4. **Sacrifice.** *Gen 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.*
5. **Altars.** *Gen 8:20 And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt offerings on the altar.*
6. **Drink offerings.** *Gen 35:14 And Jacob set up a pillar in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.*
7. **Restitution.** *Gen 31:39 That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.*
8. **The Levirate law.** *Gen 38:8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.*
9. **Punishment for Fornication.** *Gen 38:24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.*

These laws, or perhaps practices is better, appear without any record of their origin. This could mean that they are man derived and God sanctified, but against this idea we consider:

1. The nature of righteous service required revelation. *Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*
2. The revelation could be intuitive by virtue of the works of the law expressed as service to God. *Rom 2:14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Rom 2:15 Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.*
3. I suggest that to be of worth, these laws were derived by revelation of God in some way, possibly:
  - a) In a vision. *Gen 15:1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*
  - b) In sleep. *Gen 28:12 And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. Gen 28:13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of*

*Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.*

- c) In Theophany. *Gen 18:1 And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.*
- d) As an angel of Jehovah. *Gen 16:7 And the angel of the LORD found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur.*
- e) As a personal prophecy. *Gen 9:26 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.*

We see that some laws are given directly and do bind the conduct of man to his God.

1. **Marriage.** *Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*
2. **Social order.** *Gen 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*
3. **Capital punishment.** *Gen 9:6 Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.*
4. **Circumcision.** *Gen 17:3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying. Gen 17:10 This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.*

In Genesis we find the appearance of laws with their origin shown and laws without their origin shown. So far this does not preclude the existence of a Sabbath observance because it could fall outside of the scope of Genesis. The laws without stated origin appear as explanations around an historic event or situation. E.g. *Gen 38:24 And it came to pass about three months after, that it was told Judah, saying, Tamar thy daughter in law hath played the harlot; and also, behold, she is with child by whoredom. And Judah said, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt.*

The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings, particularly redemptive beginnings. From the elect individual to the Established Nation, the historic landscape accompanying these characters, later defines the relationship between the Nation of Israel and those outside. *Gen 9:26 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.* Genesis is primarily the pre-redemptive history of the Israeli Nation, not the history of law giving. I think this is why the laws that have their origin in Genesis show exhibit a redemptive and covenant background. I.e. Circumcision, so it is not improbable that a Sabbath existed.

But to us doctrine (as we stated) is not the product of probabilities. We must have a certainty because it is foolish to build on supposition. The suppositions of the Jews became “you have heard it has been said” of Christ. *Mat 5:33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths.*

Is Sabbath an ordinance for man? *Gen 2:2 And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.* Obviously not as it is written, it is simply an historic statement of fact. It is a statement of God’s personal activity by which he distinguished the work of ordering and furnishing the creation from His abode. His rest is spiritual

(for He is Spirit) and so the seventh day of God does not appear to have an evening. It is not bound by temporal duration. *Heb 4:4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works.*

I equate it with: *Rev 21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And Rev 22:3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: Rev 22:4 And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. Rev 22:5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.* Where there is no evening or night.

To further distinguish it God makes it Holy (שָׁדֵךְ = qâdash), or separate. The realm of His rest is sanctified from the temporal order. There is no evidence amongst the sons of men that they practiced a day of separation or that he was commanded to observe it before the Exodus, hence **it is not a creation ordinance**.

#### The moral core of the Sabbath

Is there a moral content in the 4<sup>th</sup> Command? Does the Sabbath contain a moral core? Yes, the basic idea is “rest”. After the fall, it is restoration and redemption (see Christ’s conflicts over Sabbath), these are the primary ideas and the product of restoration and redemption is Peace with God or Rest.

If this Sabbath law was written into the heart of man at creation, it would express itself in the need for an ordered service to God. Not chaotic but at peace or rest, the equilibrium between man and his God. The redemptive significance of Sabbath however, comes with the entry of sin, after the fall. The harmony is broken, peace is gone. Man is in bondage and Exodus chapter 20 looks back at what was and to what is a result of God’s deliverance. *Deu 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.* Both are statements of God’s object:

a. I, The Lord, have a rest,

b. I shall restore you to it. You were in bondage to the world, labouring with no rest. *Exo 2:23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. Exo 6:5 And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Exo 6:6 Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: Exo 6:7 And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. Exo 6:8 And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the LORD.*

I will take you from the land of Egypt (the land of bondage = Hagar an Egyptian = law = Jerusalem below) to my land in Canaan (My Rest = Sarah = Zion = Jerusalem above). *Gal 4:21 Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? Gal 4:22 For it is written, that Abraham had two*

sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. Gal 4:23 But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. Gal 4:24 Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. Gal 4:25 For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. Gal 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

This world holds God's children in bondage. Rev 11:8 *And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.* The idea is conceived in many allegories in scripture. They all comprise the theme "this world" and "the world to come". The "six days of this creation" against "the seventh of God". Thus the seventh day appears as Rest, not as a day of cult worship of group gatherings, but of personal rest. Exo 20:9 *Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: Exo 20:10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.*

As we see in the case law surrounding the Sabbath (i.e. seventh year of release, Jubilees, slavery), the idea of rest from this world's service becomes abundantly clear. The rest of God intimates that the temporal creation was not the ultimate goal but a route to the goal. If there was a moral component in man, did Adam have the Sabbath in this moral component only, or in a Levitical format? This however is not found in scripture. Sacrifice is recorded in his generation and much else, but no day off. I think the statements of scripture are against a 'day off' in those days.

The curse of labour gave no hope of rest in this life. Gen 3:16 *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. Gen 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.* For Adam to have copied God's rest without invitation would have been a presumptive mimic, seeing as man's work proceeding from his hand could give no cause for complacency as God had. Gen 1:31 *And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

It would have been akin to a Jew in the time of Moses neglecting ceremonial law in anticipation of Christ, 1500 years too soon. He may have had some knowledge of what was to come, but it would be unacceptable to assume its relevance for his day. Christ to the OT Jew was a future reality and so I suggest, that to Adam, the Sabbath was a future reality. Being God's Sabbath, it must follow that God must deliver it to men and those men, into it.

Noah alone is recorded as the first to enjoy God's rest (Noah means 'rest', but not the same word as Sabbath) for a year in the Ark. Here is a Sabbath type. The next people to enjoy a rest are the Israelites (this also is a type<sup>23</sup>, Heb 4:8 *For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day*). The rest still remained to be obtained by God's people.

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<sup>23</sup> If the rest of God meant Canaan, God would not after their entrance into that land, have spoken (or speak [Alford]) of another (future) day of entering the rest.



## Conclusions:

1. There is no Bible evidence for a seventh day observance by men before Exodus 16.
2. It is not a creation ordinance.
3. There is no evidence for temporal observance before Moses.
4. The moral content of the Sabbath is displayed in our attitude to God – Peace with God.

## The Sabbath defined by moral rest in Christ

There are two important points to carry forward into this exposition:

1. Correct terminology will avoid confusion in practice.
2. There is no indication for the practice of a weekly Sabbath before Exodus, neither is there Biblical evidence for it as a creation ordinance.

Now we come to the ordinance of Sabbath observance, the ordinances of rest.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> day of creation we see God setting a Divine Calendar. The sun and moon are regulators of signs and seasons. *Gen 1:14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years. Psa 104:19 He appointed the moon for seasons: the sun knoweth his going down.*

The word season is also translated congregation and is linked to the service of the Tabernacle. *Exo 29:4 And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the **congregation** (seasons), and shalt wash them with water.* The sun and moon become important in the regulation of the cult worship of Israel. The new moon signalling the start of the month accompanying a special sacrifice (The burnt offering of the new moon). Passover was executed by the sun and moon. *Exo 12:2 This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you. Lev 23:4 These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. Lev 23:5 In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover.*

The allocation of the Sabbath was not by sun or moon. This makes it quite distinctive. The manna, the bread of heaven, signifies the Sabbath, by the quality of its durability. The manna was gathered collectively and shared out and prepared so that no labour was executed on the food preparation for the day. The excess rotted if kept over on any other day but the seventh. *Exo 16:18 And when they did mete it with an omer, he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack; they gathered every man according to his eating. Exo 16:23 And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. Exo 16:20 Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto Moses; but some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank: and Moses was wroth with them.*

One month after the Exodus the manna and Sabbath are given, the manna pointing to the Sabbath. Here we can easily prefigure Christ to the burdened and heavily laden (as the Israelites were in Egypt) Christ says *Mat 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* How shall we know we have rest? By faith, peace is the foundation of rest. *Rom 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* And further Christ

sustains us in that rest by feeding us. *Joh 6:30 They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work? Joh 6:31 Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Joh 6:32 Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.*

God led the Israelites to the seventh day by the manna. Likewise Christ (the true bread) guides man to the Sabbatism (of God) the true rest. In this life we must be constantly renewing our supplies. *Joh 7:37 In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink* (present imperatives = continuous acts).

In giving the bread from heaven God was testing the obedience of the faithful and bringing the wicked into sharp relief before the nation. *Exo 16:4 Then said the LORD unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, **that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no.*** There is a similar situation to Eden. All wants were to be supplied (even their {Israelites} clothes and shoes would not wear out (Dt 29:5)). God was the gracious provider of all necessities yet would they obey Him?

Here we have again the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the manna and the law. Rather than take God at His word the people prove God. *Exo 16:27 And it came to pass, that there went out some of the people on the seventh day for to gather, and they found none.* The camp could see clearly those who rested (literally and metaphorically) upon the Word and Work of God. Those who went out on the 7<sup>th</sup> day are like those people who would embellish the provision of God's redemption, with their own efforts, when God says it is enough, I have provided all, rest in Me. *Luk 14:17 And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready.* There are those who will excuse themselves to pursue self gain. Others cannot trust God to be faithful to provide and it is as if God has no control and we must do our bit just in case God cannot do His. The manna was sufficient for the Sabbath. Christ is sufficient for our peace!

The Sabbath then, the first time it is recorded as celebrated (in the context of a delivered nation), marks out those who rest in the sufficiency of God's word and those infidels of the day who called God a liar by acting contrary to Him in practice. It does not appear that God thought man was tired and decided to give him a day off. It was a test of faith.

I do not think we should confuse the Sabbath with our bodily rhythms. It is true that there are cycles of the system, sleep and waking, tiredness and quickening, youth and old age, puberty and menopause. These come about by laws built into the biochemical system of our own self. However I do not equate these periods of quickening and ceasing with the religious ordinance of the Sabbath although they may have a typical significance. It might be argued that God did have a land Sabbath and thus there must be some natural application of the Sabbath to the physical kingdom. *Lev 25:3 Six years thou shalt sow thy field, and six years thou shalt prune thy vineyard, and gather in the fruit thereof.* Why not then also look for the physical rest of the body?

Look at the way the NT interprets the laws for the lower orders of creation. *Deu 25:4 Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.....1Co 9:9 For it is written in the Law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen?* The law of the ox was to teach man something about fairness and equity. Likewise the clean and unclean

animals of Acts chapter 10 in Peter's vision teach him not about the creation for its own sake, but rather man before God. *Act 10:28 And he said unto them, Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*

By these NT illustrations I would say that the land Sabbaths would indicate something about man, rather than earth and trees. It is not about the land, but the moral and spiritual state of man that God is concerned with. Likewise the Sabbath of every week teaches us something about the soul of man.

If we get rest in the flesh, that I suggest is purely incidental. The primary idea is service to God. Our physical metabolism does not give up until we die, so God's rest was not intended to indicate a change in bodily functions, but a change in "spiritual" direction. It is the same error that makes the pig's 'unclean' (Leviticaly) into just a physical uncleanness and neglecting the moral lesson about man himself. The Sabbath is a moral rest.

### Sabbaths and affliction

Now the case law coming out of the 4<sup>th</sup> Command leads us to variations in the theme of rest. Remember the 5<sup>th</sup> Command did not limit at mother and father. The Sabbath is not confined to a seventh day.

The term God applies to the first Sabbath is Sabbath of rest. *Exo 16:23 And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest (Sabbath) of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning.* Literally Sabbath of the Holy Sabbath.

The word Sabbath appears elsewhere in three distinct contexts.

1. The weekly Sabbath. *Exo 16:23 And he said unto them, This is that which the LORD hath said, To morrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the LORD: bake that which ye will bake to day, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning. Exo 31:15 Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Exo 35:2 Six days shall work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be to you an holy day, a sabbath of rest to the LORD: whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death.*
2. The 7<sup>th</sup> year Sabbath. *Lev 25:4 But in the seventh year shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath for the LORD: thou shalt neither sow thy field, nor prune thy vineyard.*
3. The Day of Atonement Sabbath. *Lev 16:31 It shall be a sabbath of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls, by a statute for ever. Lev 23:6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.*

I want to look in more detail at the Day of Atonement (or better the "day of covering"). The word 'Atonement' means to procure forgiveness, to pacify, propitiate. The ritual of Leviticus chapter 16 shows how everyone in Israel (Priests and all) needed cleansing. Further the sanctuary, the dwelling of God was polluted and needed cleansing. *Lev 16:16 And he shall make an atonement for the holy*

*place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins: and so shall he do for the tabernacle of the congregation, that remaineth among them in the midst of their uncleanness.*

Clearly Hebrews chapter 9 refers to this day, the only day when the Holy of Holies was penetrated. Further it shows that in the spiritual analogy, it is Christ's blood not animal blood that cleanses the soul. He has done it once. This means that the ceremony of the Day of Atonement and that which accompanies it has been fulfilled in and by Christ. While the Priest did the offerings on this day the people 'afflicted' their souls and the word 'afflict' is used in the following contexts:

1. Humbling another's wife. *Deu 22:24 Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath **humbled** his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.*
2. Bring the feet into fetters. *Psa 105:18 Whose feet they **hurt** with fetters: he was laid in iron.*
3. Of the affliction of the seed. *Gen 15:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall **afflict** them four hundred years.*
4. Servitude. *Exo 1:12 But the more they **afflicted** them, the more they multiplied and grew: and they were grieved because of the children of Israel.*

The idea of affliction is one of deliberate subjection of the soul before God. Bringing it captive to God and laying it at His feet. This may also involve fasting. For the Israelite the Sabbath of Sabbaths on the Day of Atonement was an exercise of soul before God, not a day off to lie in bed. It was most probably more tiring mentally and physically than other days, to the sincere Hebrew.

Here again we have another example of the Sabbath which is not intended to give physical rest, but rather to enter upon a spiritual exercise that will culminate in peace with God. The temporal Sabbath of Yom Kippur was to enable man to secure the eternal Sabbath. Those who refused this Sabbath were to be cut off from among the people. *Lev 23:29 For whatsoever soul it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he shall be cut off from among his people.* So the sinner who will not afflict himself will be cut off from the Christ.

Conclusion: Sabbath is not simply a physical rest.

### **The Sabbath Jubilee**

We saw that the "Sabbath" did not derive its origin from man 'needing' a day off because of tiredness, or for physical reasons. The problem in the OT is stopping him from working seven days. The capacity to work is always there. *Neh 13:21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.* That the body needs rest comes under the "natural" side of our existence.

The Day of Atonement was a "Sabbath of rest" and comes within that case law defining the breadth of the Sabbath. The Day of Atonement marked the beginning of the civil year (as opposed to Nisan). *Deu 31:10 And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles.* The sound of the trumpet went out at the end of the 7

x 7<sup>th</sup> year (49<sup>th</sup> year), so in the 50<sup>th</sup> year the Jubilee sounded, likewise at the end of the seventh year the year of release was announced. *Lev 25:8 And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Lev 25:9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.*

Christ alludes to the Jubilee as having its fulfilment in His own ministry. *Luk 4:18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.*

Isaiah is the source and clearly “the day of vengeance” cannot be separated from the context. *Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; Isa 61:2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn. Isa 34:8 For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. Isa 63:4 For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.* Where God delivers He necessarily punishes the enemy who held the captives.

Jubilee was the settling of all debts, granting of freedom and the return to the “status quo” on entering the land of Canaan. *Lev 24:10 And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel strove together in the camp; Lev 24:11 And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: (and his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan:) Lev 24:12 And they put him in ward, that the mind of the LORD might be shewed them.*

The trumpet is appropriate to the occasion signifying both assembly and impending judgement. The people gather to see the judgement of God executed. On this Sabbath of Sabbaths the people are freed from the accumulation of sin against God and in the seventh year have the bonus of temporal freedom and in the 50<sup>th</sup> year the bonus of total debt freedom. *Lev 25:9 Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubile to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land.* On this day of rest the Jewish Nation witnessed a redemptive work of God upon the whole of His creation.

The Sabbath is highly redemptive!

#### [Sabbath development](#)

The weekly Sabbath develops as the law is given, as a holy convocation. The need for a collective service becomes apparent, from the original rest of the individual before God. *Lev 23:3 Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the sabbath of rest, an holy convocation; ye shall do no work therein: it is the sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.* This developed through the Babylonian captivity into Synagogue worship (although Synagogues (as buildings) are not a legal requirement of the Law. *Act 15:21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the*

*synagogues every sabbath day..... Act 13:27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.*

Perhaps the reading of the law derived from the practise of the seventh year Atonement Sabbath. *Deu 31:10 And Moses commanded them, saying, **At the end of every seven years**, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, Deu 31:11 When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, **thou shalt read this law** before all Israel in their hearing.* However, the weekly Sabbath convocation is not specifically presided over by the Priesthood. The Priesthood had their own duties which were greatly increased on this day (and as Christ showed it was not considered Sabbath breaking). Their duties on Sabbath's were:

1. Sacrifices. *Num 28:9 And on the sabbath day two lambs of the first year without spot, and two tenth deals of flour for a meat offering, mingled with oil, and the drink offering thereof: Num 28:10 This is the burnt offering of every sabbath, beside the continual burnt offering, and his drink offering.*
2. Shewbread. *Lev 24:5 And thou shalt take fine flour, and bake twelve cakes thereof: two tenth deals shall be in one cake. Lev 24:6 And thou shalt set them in two rows, six on a row, upon the pure table before the LORD. Lev 24:7 And thou shalt put pure frankincense upon each row, that it may be on the bread for a memorial, even an offering made by fire unto the LORD. Lev 24:8 Every sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, being taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant.*

These ceremonies pass with the passing of the Levitical Priesthood and the establishment of Christ's Priesthood.

#### **Sabbath duties to dependents**

The last point I want to draw about the weekly Sabbath is the general application to servants, cattle and sojourners. *Deu 5:14 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.*

Is it because cows and goats have a religious duty to God? We saw the ox was not muzzled to teach man a lesson, (1 Corinthians 9). I suggest the same principle is involved here. The lesson I think is this. As Adam was God's vice gerent, the earth was subject to man who in turn yielded its fruit to God. *Gen 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.* It is similar to Paul's statement of collective subjection, Christ gives to the Father. *1Co 15:27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 1Co 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

The fall altered the order in practice and man became the self centre of the world. It was worked for his own ends, for his own profit and for his own extension of power. *Rom 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.* The Sabbath brings the creature back under God. Man is not to serve his own ends all

the time. What profit indeed if he gains the whole world? *Luk 12:22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.*

Do not get a divided mind, a mind full of cares about the things of this life, like that “poor” rich man of scripture. *Luk 12:16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: Luk 12:17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? Luk 12:18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. Luk 12:19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. Luk 12:20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? Luk 12:21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*

The weekly Sabbath forced this condition upon mankind. Those animals, those servants of man, are not to help you build wealth for its own sake. They were given as helps to enable you to serve God, not yourself. The rest imposed stopped man from serving himself, to see his true position and duty. It was ‘God service’, the Sabbath of Jehovah thy God. *Exo 20:10 But the seventh day is **the sabbath of the LORD thy God**: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates.*

This is made abundantly clear from the NT. In the ‘rest of God’, God is served continually. *Rev 7:15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and **serve him day and night** in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.*

The ultimate in Sabbath keeping is then total service to God, or entering into HIS rest. Clearly the NT sees these OT ordinances as shadows. ‘Shadow Sabbaths’, darkness in comparison to the true light, the object which they specified. *Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Col 2:17 **Which are a shadow of things to come**; but the body is of Christ. Heb 8:5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.*

The OT services are clearly representative of something more definite. They are as a shadow is related to an actual structure. The light is obscured by the body throwing a shadow over the OT. Thus the OT could not distinctly perceive through ceremony the perfect truth of God, rather it was there but indistinct. The main point is that by “Sabbath” we see intended, a person, (Christ) the “Body”. A person not a time! A person not a place!

The carnal Jews even with their veil on the heart welcome the Sabbath as a King or Bridegroom (Edersheim) or more strangely (or not) a bride “come my friend to meet the bride; let us welcome the presence of the Sabbath” (from Sabbath Services, prayer book of Jewish members of HM Forces). Even the Jews by nature see the Sabbath as representative of a person. God in giving the OT people the Sabbaths was displaying Christ under a similitude of a shadow.

I have suggested that the prime aim of the Sabbath was a spiritual representation of Christ. Not for physical rest, though this may or may not be derived it is not the primary idea. How then are we to



interpret: *Exo 23:12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.* Surely it is physical refreshment?

The word refresh (נפש = nâphash), is the verbal form of the noun (נפש = nephesh), soul. Refresh could then also be written 're-spirited', 're-souled' or 'new souled'. It could imply the renewing of the whole man. The third and only other place this word occurs it: *Exo 31:17 It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.* God was refreshed on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

Now by this example I suggest man's refreshment is to be modelled on God's rest: *Exo 23:12 Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.* Notice this says that the animals rested (not that they were refreshed) and that human's are refreshed. That makes refreshment distinctly non-bodily or the animals would have it. If refreshment were temporal, with the design to improve the temporal output of the creation, the creation not Christ would be the central purpose.

In Ex 23:12 the LXX puts 'recreation' (ἀνάπαυσις = anapausis) for 'refresh' which has a very pointed Christological meaning. *Act 3:19 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; Act 3:20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you.* Refreshing comes from God, as the gift of Jesus Christ. I suggest that God's true refreshment is in Christ. *Mar 1:11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* The Sabbath as a delight is clearly Christ as God's delight. And God I suggest is rested and refreshed His being in the contemplation of His Glory in the person of Christ. Thus God rests upon the "mercy seat" to commune with us.

I take Ex 23:12 as an example of refreshment to be modelled upon the person and work of Christ in which God delighted. The Lord God did not derive rest or refreshment from contemplation of the six days, on the contrary He returned to the sanctity of His abode in the heavenlies where the meaning of His work had its origin and pattern. Here He conferred with the Son our peace and our rest. This I think the lesson the Jew was being taught each and every Sabbath, (hebdomadial) feasts, that is to sanctify (Christ) or God in the round of temporal duties. "What is thine only comfort in life and death? asks Heidelberg Question 1. Answer. That with body and soul, both in life and death, I am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ."

The failure to keep the Sabbath would destroy the whole fabric of Judaism.

*Jer 17:19 Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; Jer 17:20 And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: Jer 17:21 Thus saith the LORD; **Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem;** Jer 17:22 **Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers.** Jer 17:23 **But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction.** Jer 17:24 **And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no***



*burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; Jer 17:25 Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever. Jer 17:26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD. Jer 17:27 **But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.***

### Sabbath and eschatology

We now consider the eschatological expectations of the Jews concerning the Sabbath. The OT gives relatively few glances at the Sabbath from the time of the Exodus to the exile. We may glean that the Sabbath and associated offerings were made up to David's time. *1Ch 23:31 And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD.* It will appear that the seven yearly Sabbath was never observed from the time of the kings and was the primary cause of the Jewish Captivity.

That all is not well in Israel/Judah is shown in the prophets that God sends to call the people to repentance. Hosea and Isaiah (c 650 BC) both condemn the nation's moral behaviour. The ceremonies are worthless forms because the heart is not right with God, which is a principle message of the prophets. *Hos 6:6 **For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.....** Isa 1:10 Hear the word of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. Isa 1:11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. Isa 1:12 When ye come to appear before me, **who hath required this at your hand,** to tread my courts? Isa 1:13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Isa 1:14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.*

This should have caused every Jew to consider just what the purposes of ceremonies were and just what it was that pleased God! Through Isaiah God shows the Sabbath as a worthless desecration, Ceremonies without morality are sinful and can sidetrack from duty. *Isa 1:13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; **the new moons and sabbaths,** the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Mat 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.* Through Hosea they are told their privilege soon to be withdrawn. *Hos 2:11 I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.*

God firstly visits the split kingdom (Israel and Judah) and takes Israel captive to Babylon. *2Ki 17:6 In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and*

*placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. 2Ki 17:7 For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, 2Ki 17:16 And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, even two calves, and made a grove, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.*

Judah stumbles on for a few more decades becoming more corrupt until she too is taken. 2Ch 36:20 *And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia.* This also gave the land rest for failure to observe the land Sabbath, 2Ch 36:21 *To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.*

Having castigated the Nation by Isaiah God did not leave them without hope. From judgement springs mercy and God displays to the nation times to come when they will keep the law. Having declared in Isaiah chapter 53 the Servant of the Lord who would bear their sins, the effects of the work of redemption are laid before the Nation. Sabbath keeping is again foretold. Isa 56:4 *For thus saith the LORD unto **the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths**, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; Isa 56:5 Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name(a hand and a name Yad va Shem) better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. Isa 56:6 Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the LORD, to serve him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant.*

The Eunuch who kept the Sabbath was now admitted to the sanctuary (formerly the domain of Priests) from which he was barred under law. Lev 21:17 *Speak unto Aaron, saying, Whosoever he be of thy seed in their generations that hath any blemish, let him not approach to offer the bread of his God. Lev 21:18 For whatsoever man he be that hath a blemish, he shall not approach: a blind man, or a lame, or he that hath a flat nose, or any thing superfluous, Lev 21:19 Or a man that is brokenfooted, or brokenhanded, Lev 21:20 Or crookbackt, or a dwarf, or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be scurvy, or scabbed, or hath his stones broken; Lev 21:21 No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire: he hath a blemish; he shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.* Clearly Eunuchs, in Isaiah's future, would reach the stature of the perfect man, which prophecy, I suggest is referring to Christ's Kingdom not the old Jewish Kingdom.

In the 66<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Isaiah we see the nations coming to Jerusalem from Sabbath to Sabbath to worship. Isa 66:20 *And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the LORD out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the LORD, as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. Isa 66:21 And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the LORD. Isa 66:22 For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.* Now what do we make of that? Here is a prime problem of OT exegesis. Is it literal or spiritual, or a mixture?

Take for example, Mal 4:5 *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.* Did Elijah have to come in person? No, Mar 9:13 *But I say unto you,*

*That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.* There was a literal person i.e. John in the Spirit of Elijah. Clearly the NT does not always use the OT literally. There is a principle of transfer from the symbolic object. Elijah is the fiery prophet, the man who made rain to cease in Israel, the man who declared the true God and killed the prophets of Baal who was to be raised again in Israel. Was the significance in the person of Elijah, or what his work symbolised? Clearly Jesus shows us it is in the symbol.

So Isaiah chapter 66 could also be seen in this light, not a literally Sabbath or literal Jerusalem, or literally every week, but in the moral principles of these symbols being observed (See Patrick Fairbairn, *Interpretation of Prophecy* p 54-55).

Is the feast of tabernacles still required to be held in earthly Jerusalem in the New Covenant? The following must lead us to a non-literal conclusion. *Zec 14:16 And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles.....* Joh 4:20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Joh 4:21 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

We now look at the message of Jeremiah who was raised at the time of Judah's downfall. *Jer 17:19 Thus said the LORD unto me; Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, whereby the kings of Judah come in, and by the which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; Jer 17:20 And say unto them, Hear ye the word of the LORD, ye kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that enter in by these gates: Jer 17:21 Thus saith the LORD; Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the sabbath day, nor bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; Jer 17:22 Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work, but hallow ye the sabbath day, as I commanded your fathers. Jer 17:23 But they obeyed not, neither inclined their ear, but made their neck stiff, that they might not hear, nor receive instruction. Jer 17:24 And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; Jer 17:25 Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever. Jer 17:26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah, and from the places about Jerusalem, and from the land of Benjamin, and from the plain, and from the mountains, and from the south, bringing burnt offerings, and sacrifices, and meat offerings, and incense, and bringing sacrifices of praise, unto the house of the LORD. Jer 17:27 But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.*

Judah like Israel had failed in Sabbath observance, in fact Jeremiah here sees the permanence of the monarchy as dependent upon Sabbath keeping. Whilst it seems from the context to be weekly Sabbaths, the idea must comprise all Sabbaths because the nation is exiled to give the land her Sabbath. The promise of Leviticus is fulfilled in Jeremiah's day. *Lev 26:33 And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities*

waste. *2Ch 36:21 To fulfil the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath, to fulfil threescore and ten years.*

The nature of the Sabbath keeping we saw was rest in God and service to God. The failure must imply dissatisfaction with God, idolatry and rebellion. Here is also a lesson for weekly Sabbatharians in that God punished the nation for a failure of the land Sabbath. Nehemiah holds the Sabbaths as a unified structure i.e. weekly and yearly together. *Neh 13:17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day? Neh 13:18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.*

70 years were to be fulfilled, i.e. 7 x 70 years of Sabbaths that were broken. The captivity being circa 500 BC, this would put the period of disobedience starting at circa 1000 BC, which is the commencement of the reign of the Kings of Israel. Clearly the land enjoyed no Sabbath under the earthly kings. As we shall see it is only under the Heavenly King that it can truly be restored to this blessed state. There is a typical significance in this.

Ezekiel, the prophet of the captivity, reminds the people of their failure to serve God, Ezekiel chapter 20. Particularly in Sabbath keeping, that blessed sign of favour that showed the mark of God's sanctification. *Eze 20:12 Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the LORD that sanctify them.* To keep the Sabbath was to take the sign, as circumcision, also was an outward form of a spiritual symbol.

To reject the sign of the Sabbath was to reject the sanctifying influence of God. It was to desecrate the people and make them no different to the gentiles. Ezekiel has, like Isaiah, a message of hope, the good news comes last. Through the prophet a life giving word issues to those dead. The house of Israel is bought to life, Ezekiel chapter 37. How well does this signify Christ's words. *Joh 11:24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Joh 11:25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: Joh 11:26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? Joh 5:25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. (Not a general resurrection).*

This life will serve God truly in the ideal city of Jerusalem and the temple of which the earthly is a shadow of true worship. Ezekiel (chapters 40 - 48). The prince who sits before Jehovah supplies the Sacrifices and makes offerings as well. *Eze 44:3 It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same. Eze 45:17 And **it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings**, and meat offerings, and drink offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: **he shall prepare the sin offering**, and the meat offering, and the burnt offering, and the peace offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel. Eze 45:21 In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. Eze 45:22 And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin offering. Eze 45:23 And seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily the seven days; and a kid of the goats daily for a sin offering. Eze 45:24 And he shall prepare a meat offering of an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah. Eze 45:25*

*In the seventh month, in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of the seven days, according to the sin offering, according to the burnt offering, and according to the meat offering, and according to the oil.*

The combination of prince and high priest leads us to consider a royal priesthood. The prince clearly does the work of the high priest. *Lev 16:6 And Aaron shall offer his bullock of the sin offering, which is for himself, and make an atonement for himself, and for his house.* The services of the Passover and Atonement here are a mirror of each other and they become the same.

Whatever else it may imply, the idea of permanence in ceremonial service is destroyed and there is a promise of obedience to all that the law symbolised. *Eze 44:24 And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; and they shall judge it according to my judgments: and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my sabbaths.* The Sabbath again being part of the idealised worship shows a considerable glorification with respect to its offerings. I.e. *Eze 46:4 And the burnt offering that the prince shall offer unto the LORD in the sabbath day shall be six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish.* It exceeds the Mosaic requirements.

Whether the Jews from the passages we cited exegeted the passages in a spiritual rather than horizontal and literal fashion is not absolutely clear. Certainly some did like Zachariah and Simeon. *Luk 1:68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people.* (See Fairbairn Op cit p53).

The return from Babylon did not change the style of worship or the form of the rebuilt temple into the pattern of Ezekiel's vision. It was not commanded (like the creation Sabbath), it is not executed. The rituals are not altered showing that it was not literal i.e. it is given no time to be fulfilled by man.

The Jews were clearly on their guard about Sabbath keeping. Nehemiah reintroduces the land Sabbaths and is very rigorous over the seventh day observance. *Neh 10:31 And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt..... Neh 13:15 In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.* Clearly he does not want a repeat performance of the exile.

This rigour becomes ingrained in the Jewish people. The letter of the law becomes an obsession, ruling man as if man were made for the Sabbath as woman was made for man. The Sabbath 'lorded' it over the people and that which was a delight became a snare and a stumbling block.

Against the historical background of Sabbath failure, Christ's apparent disregard for the Mosaic institution was tantamount to bringing the nation down again, risking another captivity. I do not doubt the sincerity of the Pharisees and Scribes in their Sabbath keeping. What is evident is that their understanding of the initial aims of the Sabbath was deficient and this Christ continually corrects.

We shall outline more fully the correctives that Christ applies to blind legalism of the Sabbath. The OT does not leave us without an expectation of the Sabbath, but the nature of that Sabbath is to be refined.

#### The Sabbath in Hebrews chapter 4

The epistle to the Hebrews declares the Revelation God in the person of Christ and explains in **the first chapter** the exalted person of the son above even the angels. *Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds. Heb 1:13 But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?*

In **the second chapter**, the surety of the angelic word is a warning to us, in view of the greater position occupied by Christ. *Heb 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; They did not escape from the sure judgements accompanying the angelic word, how then shall we escape from the words of the greater person of the Son of God. Heb 2:3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*

By sharing our flesh and blood we have an intimate association with Him whereby He can minister to our needs, as High Priest. Through death He destroys death, so liberating His children. *Heb 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. Heb 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Heb 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

From what has been said it might appear that “believers” are passive and that salvation is a fatalistic dispensing of God’s mercy without your activity. Here the writer looks at the duty, or activity of the “believers” and this is, practically, an exhortation to duty. Chapters 3 and 4 of the Epistle are a digression and the subject of Christ’s priesthood is taken up again with strong evidences from chapters 5 to 10 which also show the typical relationship of Jesus to the OT sanctuary and offerings (chapters 11 to 13) a practical reflection of faith and duty.

**Chapters 3 and 4** deal with the believer’s duty to God, which are the responses that should appear to God’s promises of mercy. This is beautifully illustrated by the concept of the Faithful Apostle and High Priest, who we shall see is set beside Moses to give us a tale of two peoples.

1. Moses and the Children of Israel.
2. Christ and the children of Israel.

The epistle abounds in parallels between what happened in the OT and what happens in the NT (the typology of the OT). For example:

1. **Aaron/Christ.** *Heb 5:4 And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*
2. **Melchizedek/Christ.** *Heb 7:17 For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.*

3. **Earth/Heaven.** *Heb 8:5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.*
4. **Christ's blood/Animal blood.** *Heb 9:12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

There is a race to be run and there are prizes. To enter the race is no proof of finishing. *Heb 3:14 For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;* The confidence of finishing is the proof of the sincere runner. He enters to win, he makes sure he is on the track and not an observer in the stands, the children are watching the race from the stands and we urge them to enter the race.

The confidence of salvation should then be derived from the work of Christ in a man urging him toward the finishing tape, to which "The Spirit draws him...". *Joh 6:44 No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.* As Calvin said, "thus believers enter in, but on condition that they continuously run and press on".

The argument of the writer is to make us aware of the error of unbelief, as in Numbers 14, of not taking God at His word. By unbelief we make God to be a liar and suffer the consequences of rejection. Hebrews 4 very cleverly directs us forward, like the evangelist in Pilgrim's Progress, pointing up the hill, it defines our goal, states our target, declares the prize and gives us our present position. *Php 3:12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Php 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, Php 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

We have grounds for confidence, none for complacency. We are directed to Heaven itself, Mount Zion, the city of God. *Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having **seen them afar off**, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Heb 11:14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. Heb 11:15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. Heb 11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.* There and there alone shall we fully rest. *Heb 4:8 For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. Heb 4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.* This shows that no earthly Jew ever entered God's rest on this earth.

Canaan was a 'type' of 'rest', and the text speaks of not seeing the land which is identified with the 'rest'. *Heb 3:10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. Num 14:23 Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it. Psa 95:11 Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.*

Now we might think that Canaan was the 'The Rest', but that is not so. *Heb 4:8 For if Jesus (Joshua) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.* The OT people (many

of them) failed to get God's rest on earth (temporal type) which is a warning that many do not get it spiritually for the same reason, unbelief, or perhaps disobedience.

The verses are difficult and thus I have separated them to give the sense by inserting divisions.

*Heb 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, **not being mixed with faith** in them that heard it. (Heb 4:3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.) Heb 4:4 For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. Heb 4:5 And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Heb 4:6 Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Heb 4:7 Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

The expression "although" seems to be an antithesis between God's rest then and God's rest now. I.e. if God rested on the seventh day, how can I now in the future be a partaker of the past rest? The conclusion must be:

1. That God rested and
2. That rest is still attainable because it remains.....

The Genesis Sabbath of God by this statement becomes the goal of the saints, 'The Sabbatism that remains'. As the weekly Sabbath was modelled on it (the Genesis Sabbath), the weekly Sabbath was a type or shadow of the heavenly rest, the eternal rest. *Exo 20:11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.* The Sabbaths of Israel must derive significance from this interpretation of the eternal Sabbath. He, Jesus, is the "pattern in the mountain".

Of course it is not an end of worship but rather it is the full communion with our Saviour. To enter into rest will enable us to be face to face with God in His fullness. The dark mirror will be broken. To be in the eternal Sabbath is to be with Christ forever.

To that end Hebrews 4 closes with the reminder of the power of the word of God and how it can bisect us. *Heb 4:12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Heb 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*

People may claim to be unconvinced, not persuaded but in God's terms they are in unbelief. God's word is powerful and effectual and we are denuded before Him. Let us not fool ourselves. Hebrews 4 is thus the NT doctrine of the 4<sup>th</sup> Command and a powerful exhortation to holiness and perseverance.

### [Jesus and the weekly Sabbath](#)

There is a deliberate confrontation between Christ and the formal Judaisers on the understanding of the Sabbath. *Luk 6:7 And the scribes and Pharisees watched him, whether he would heal on the*



*sabbath day; that they might find an accusation against him. Luk 6:8 But he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Luk 6:9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? Luk 6:10 And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.* I regard the modern Sabbatarians, call them what you will, possessed by much the same spirit. They strain at gnats and swallow camels. *Mat 23:5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.*

The failure of the Sabbatarians comes about by not understanding the principles of the Law and it is this that is set before men by Christ. We must make the observation that Christ is not in His own day abrogating the Sabbath laws as the OT has not ceased (remember that Jesus' ministry is an OT ministry), but He does lay the bridge for understanding the Sabbath in the light of redemption. Christ uses the teaching facility of the synagogue and it is here that He so often, publicly, confronts the Jews about their error. *Luk 4:16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.*

There is in man stubbornness to change, the hardness and immobility of heart and unwillingness to relinquish his own ways and thoughts for God's ways. The miracle of the Messiah had come in their midst and what could they say? *Luk 4:22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son? Luk 4:23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy country. Luk 4:24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country.* The workings of God's hands are often only understood on reflection. We may pass through a miracle yet not see it until afterwards, so gently does God work. Pray we do not have the same spirit of unbelief.

There is an idea in many religious circles that conflict on doctrine is contrary to the grace which should accompany a Christian profession. "Let us by all means keep the peace". That is their concept of love, meekness and mercy. The sacrifice they made to do this of course was to remove "truth". If you had the offer to minister amongst a denominational gathering what would you preach on?

**You would have a precedent from scripture to preach on the errors of the sect. It is apostolic.**

*Acts 13 Paul. Act 5:28 Peter - Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.* See also the string of the epistles against error i.e. Galatians, 1 John, Ephesians etc. Love does not remain silent in the face of error, but the promptings of satan will, satan does not desire this, satan wants silence because it causes dissent and schism to fester into a worse sort. He doesn't always do things quietly. The public abuse of the Pharisees over the Sabbath is not dealt with in the silence of a council chamber, but publicly with powerful signs. I do not though for a moment say that it was despised by all, though some must have.

The points then coming out of the confrontation with the Jews, whether in the field of house or synagogue are as follows:

1. **Restoration.** There are many occurrences of Christ's healing on the Sabbath, and I choose to illustrate with Luke. *Luk 13:10 And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. Luk 13:11 And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. Luk 13:12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. Luk 13:13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. Luk 13:14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day. Luk 13:15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?*

The woman has an infirmity and is without strength, weak and bent together. The humanism of hypocrites extended to animals, but not to men. This woman was bound like the animals, yet by satan, and God would have her released. It is a condemnation of the ruler of the Synagogue who shows himself squarely on satan's side, not God's by not desiring the woman's freedom.

There is much more though, in that the final entry into eternal Sabbath is the final loosing from all power of satan. Restoration accompanies release.

2. **Sabbath for man.** *Mar 2:27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.* Man had become enslaved to an institution. It is as if God was no longer worshipped, but the Sabbath was. It had gotten its own personality, its own ritual and its own laws. Christ teaches that contrary to opinion, the Sabbath is on account of man. I suggest on account of his fallen state, his sin and ignorance. A means to an end, not the end.

Sabbath was to serve man to give him relief, delight, an opportunity to serve God (Illustrated by Christ's Lordship). As woman was to serve man, so Sabbath was to serve man. Not the other way round. This shows that many Jews had failed to see God's purpose in the Rest of God which believers should enter (Hebrews 4).

3. **Law order maintained.** God transcends the rules of man, this is the Divine right. God is Law! *Joh 5:17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* Having healed at Bethesda (House of Mercy) He states that as God has worked, so He works.

Here is the statement of God's continual operation transferred to the Son "Whom he had established heir of all things" and it is on the Sabbath day. The Sabbath does not by this argument imply a cessation from all work. "My Father works..." shows the unceasing activity of God.

The creation rest of God was not by this same token a cessation from the careful maintenance of the law and order of the temporal cosmos. Restoring and maintaining order are part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Command. In the OT we saw that in the maintenance of the Kingdom's peace and order hung on Sabbath observance. The law order was consistence with Sabbath keeping, the tassels given after Sabbath breaking were to remind them of their walk. *Jer*

*17:24 And it shall come to pass, if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the LORD, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the sabbath day, but hallow the sabbath day, to do no work therein; Jer 17:25 Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes sitting upon the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they, and their princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and this city shall remain for ever. Num 15:37 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Num 15:38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: Num 15:39 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring:*

In Hebrews 4 we saw exactly the same thing, Jeremiah updated! Maintenance of the law order in your life is faith in God's word. If you believe, you keep the peace with God, faith with God and the law with God. Faith in His word (law) constitutes in scripture the entering into the rest of God. Faith is taking God's word as law and indivisible. *Heb 4:2 For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. Heb 4:3 For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. Rom 4:20 He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.*

Thus God by maintaining the law order shows that it is consistent with Sabbath duties which for us is the true keeping of the real (not shadow) Sabbath.

### [The Sabbath summarised](#)

What then is the summary of this Commandment?

God's rest in eternity was the absolute reality which laid the pattern for all the earthly Sabbaths. Not only did it give itself as a basis for the weekly Sabbath, (Exodus 20) but it laid itself out as a reality of Canaan. *Heb 3:11 So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. Heb 4:8 For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.* Hebrews chapter 4 refutes the continuance of the earthly Sabbath, by making a clear exposition of the Sabbath as the goal of believers in the Heavens. The Genesis 'rest' of God holds good for us now in the NT, further as an aside it establishes the genuineness of Genesis chapter 2 and the continuity of the two testaments.

With this in mind, the OT Sabbaths were but shadows of the heavenly reality. Earthly rest was but a taste of Heaven's joys. The NT confirms this exegesis by laying out the shadowy nature of the 'old' and further confirming our release from temporal obligations by removing us from judgement regarding observance. *Col 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Col 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*

Judgement implies a judicial sentence. *Rev 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.* That is you cannot separate judgement from some form of recompense.

The OT judgements for Sabbath breaking was a 'capital' sentence of death and was outside the realm of mercy. *Num 15:32 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. Num 15:33 And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. Num 15:34 And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. Num 15:35 And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. Num 15:36 And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.*

Yet the NT removes all ideas of judgment from earthly Sabbath breaking. Why? Because, for the Christian, Sabbath keeping is striving to enter God's rest (Hebrews chapters 3 and 4). There is no longer need for earthly temporal landmarks and weekly or yearly times and seasons to guide us. We look not to days, or months or years, the 'beggarly elements', but steadfastly unto Jesus, the Lord of the Sabbath. *Gal 4:9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to **the weak and beggarly elements**, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Gal 4:10 Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. Gal 4:11 I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.*

It is Jesus who cast the shadows, Jesus who is the rest and Jesus who is the reality. *"No man cometh to the Father but by Me. Come unto me and I will give you rest. Justified by faith we have peace with God".*

That is why the other guides have been removed, it is because Jesus has been set forth among you. What insolence to God to follow a shadow when we have been commanded to follow the reality. Men may like to be bound under laws of their own making, but do not be fooled by NT Sabbatarism which is high Judaism, looking backwards not forwards.

Works without Christ amount to failure and works done without command are presumption and works done without faith (the word) are sin.

### The 3<sup>RD</sup> COMMAND.

*Exo 20:7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*

#### Exposition

Three questions confront us:

1. What is in vain?
2. What is the Name?
3. What is “taking up” the name?

**What does ‘vain’ mean?** In the Hebrew, vain (שוא = shâv') means wicked or false and hence empty on account of disappointment or emptiness caused by a false hope. In linguistics the word for vain is applied to a vowel “sheva” the two dots one above the other because of its light or hurried sound.



The name of God is not to be “taken up lightly, in a hurried or evil fashion. This means that there is a value in the name of God. The Name is worthy of consideration.

**What is the Name?** The tetragram, יהוה was the name of God and held in such reverence by the Jews that they would not pronounce it. The word ‘name’ (שם = shêm) comes from a root meaning to excavate, hollow, distinguish and specify.

To use the ‘Name’ blasphemously invoked the death penalty. *Lev 24:16 And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death.)*

I imagine that the name was not spoken to avoid any misuse of the ‘name’. This presents a matter of speculation on its pronunciation<sup>24</sup>. YAHWEH, JEHOVAH, JAHOWEH?

“The Lord evidently was more interested in our personal relationship to Him than our pronunciation of His name. Morality is not a sanction against sounds, but of the attitude of the heart to God and the name is a symbol that represents the person. Using “in vain” is not mispronunciation, but a misconception of who God is and then it follows a misapplication of this knowledge. Who is Jehovah? The word is a tinkling cymbal if there is no information to accompany the words.”

In Egypt the names of kings and princes were put in little ovals called “cartouches” (cartridges). The scholar Champollion, from his assumption that this was true, was able to interpret the other hieroglyph symbols. The Rosetta stone has a triple text (Greek, demotic<sup>25</sup> and hieroglyphs) and thus knowing the Greek, he could interpolate the hieroglyphics (cross script letter recognition). The previously unintelligible symbols began to have a meaning and a personality was uncovered. The

<sup>24</sup> R.L.Harris on pronunciation of the tetragram, in Skilton Law and the Prophets

<sup>25</sup> Demotic (from Greek: δημοτικός dēmotikós, "popular") is the ancient Egyptian script derived from northern forms of hieratic used in the Nile Delta, and the stage of the Egyptian language written in this script, following Late Egyptian and preceding Coptic.

meaning of the cartouche is unclear and it may have been a symbol of Divinity. Today amulets of this very shape are worn against the superstitious possibility of losing your name or personality. Within this oval are symbols that collectively represent the idea of the king and something of his nature. To this end Christ is a cartouche of God. "In Him dwelt the witness of the Godhead bodily". 'God' is just a word to our neighbours and the concepts which identify Him are all but unknown to them.

How do we identify 'God'? If we were talking to a stranger from another culture, would his concept of 'god' be the same as ours? Even in the churches, 'god' has many different faces. We start by identifying our God as the Creator of Heaven and Earth. There can be little ambiguity in that. The names of God, as we have seen, are all revelations of His person and work.

Firstly, the name Elohim comes before us in Genesis. Elohim is a 'plural' of majesty, a collective name for more than one person. *Gen 1:26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.* In the context, the Creator identifies this God in a specific attribute, Lord of heaven and earth.

Elohim is Jesus, *Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* This shows the pre-existent of Christ before any temporal creation. *Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by him, and for him:*** *Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* Therefore not only does Christ create, but that creation derives its purpose and meaning from His sovereignty. *Isa 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and **I will do all my pleasure.*** As regards the elect, that purpose is to be the praise of His glory. *Eph 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: Eph 1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

**What is "taking up" the name?** It is using the name, literally 'lifting up the Name of the Creator. Hence taking up the name in a casual and light manner is disrespectful to our Maker and is punished.

We would include in the infringement of the third Command, making the creation a separate work of God and to deny the Divinity of Jesus in that act, also to deny the pre-existence of Christ. Calvin remarks on John 1 "For he does not ascribe a temporal beginning to the word, but by saying that He was from the beginning transcends all times". Misrepresenting the Creator and His persons is to take His Name lightly.

Let us extend our reasoning on this CREATIVE facet of God. All of creation derives existence and substance from God. Perjury becomes, by this an offence against God, even without using His name! *Mat 5:33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: Mat 5:34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Mat 5:35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Mat 5:36 **Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. Mat 5:37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.***

Jesus shows in this, that every part of creation has a relationship with God. To confirm an oath by Heaven is just the same as swearing by God. The Jews devalued the truth by thinking that lesser objects could take out the obligation – not so! TRUTH is to be rendered primarily before God whether or not a secondary object is involved. Even your ‘head’ is under His Sovereignty, because God controls the functions of it. All swearing in the last case must fall back on the God of creation (all things are associated with God), ‘yes’ or ‘no’ then become sufficient affirmations by God’s rule. I.e. Will you tell the truth? Answer yes or no. From the name ELOHIM we have already arrived at a concept of creation and its relationship to truth.

JEHOVAH comes before us as the covenant of God. *Gen 15:18 In the same day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.* The name being derived from the verb “to be”, as revealed here the historical continuity of the elect is shown and also becomes the personal name of God to His own people (see Jesus – Jehovah Saviour. *Exo 3:15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. Exo 6:2 And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD.* Fully revealed in redemption.

As Elohim showed us God the power of creation, Jehovah is God the Eternal one. *Exo 3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* When Jesus declares, *Joh 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.* Jesus places Himself in the same category as the Eternal and Pre-existent.

What is the title ‘first and last’? *Isa 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God,* is an appellation related to Christ. *Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.* It is a declaration of sovereignty not simply temporal durability, that is, not time, but of personality.

It is used three times in Isaiah:

- *Isa 41:4 Who hath wrought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? I the LORD, the first, and with the last; I am he.*
- *Isa 44:6 Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*
- *Isa 48:12 Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.*

Three times in Apocalypse:

- *Rev 1:17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:*
- *Rev 2:8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;*
- *Rev 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.*

Thus Christ is in union with Elohim as creator God, so also He is Jehovah the covenant God. To put Christ (The Son of God not son of man) as subordinate to God in worship or power is to abuse the 3<sup>rd</sup> Command. Thus Jehovah's Witnesses (Russellites) and Mormons (etc) abuse God by putting Christ as less than Jehovah.

This complex relationship of the persons in the one God, is the three persons of the Shema. *Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD.* (spoken as last words over a dying man, before bed time, on the day of atonement etc – see Prayer book of Jewish Servicemen). This is one of the articles of faith that cannot be rationalised. Jehovah singular is one, Elohim plural is one Jehovah.

AMEN is the final name I want to consider for the moment. Jehovah thy Elohim is the AMEN. *Deu 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations.* AMEN is the Hebrew transliteration. It means to support, to be firm, faithful, of long continuance, trusty. It is an attribute of God that is communicable.

AMEN is not solely the possession of the Father, but of the Son. *Joh 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. Isa 65:16 That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in **the God of truth**; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.*

Here in God is the object of truth for blessing and swearing. Here we are not taking God's name in vain. As Christ is the faithful and true witness – the AMEN. *Rev 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.* The beginning (ἀρχή = archē) of the creation of God, He forms the eternal purpose and reason for truth and stability. To the Laodiceans this address (also the seventh and last letter) appropriately shows forth the primacy of Christ.

The Laodiceans have a wrong perspective on their condition and an indifference to works, it is necessary to set before them the meaning of life (see Psalm 73). *Rev 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. Rev 3:17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.*

When viewed from the origin they must appear very different than they do outwardly looking at each other. Truth will only have absolute value in religion when its absolute source is found. That lies outside of finite humans like Confucius, Mohamed, Buddha etc.

“Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth” said Archimedes. In 250 BC Archimedes had begun formulating the physics of levers. Needless to say the Archimedean point lies outside the earth. So it is with religion, that point lies outside of creation in eternity. Buddha's attempt to change men, or find a basis of truth is like a man pulling his hair to lift himself up or Archimedes levering the earth using a mountain as a point. The lever moves and achieves nothing. In God we have this AMEN, the foundation, the point from which we can shift and alter men in a real and permanent way. Unless we get out of self, own philosophy, law, ideas, we shall not see ourselves as we are or as God see us. We must look from God's position – we must conform to Him.



### God's claim to be 'AMEN' proved

- a) Power to PREDESTINATE. *Dan 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? Dan 4:36 At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.*
- b) Power of OMNIPOTENCE. *Isa 40:26 Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth.*
- c) Power of OMNISCIENCE. *Joh 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. Gen 18:12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? Gen 18:13 And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Gen 18:14 Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. Gen 18:15 Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh. Job 42:2 I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee.*
- d) Certainty of prophecy. *Gen 15:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.*
- e) Power to sanctify. *Psa 89:35 Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. Joh 17:17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*

To deny the faithfulness of God and to deny the truth of God is a condemnation of the triune Elohim. Practical disobedience to God is exactly the same rendering the 3<sup>rd</sup> Command void.

### The 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> COMMAND.

The first three 3 Commands are very closely linked and I will run them into each other.

The devils misrepresentations of God are still with us today. There are times when they become visible misrepresentations, idols or false gods, but the Bible declares service to such is to the demons.

*1Co 10:19 What say I then? that the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 1Co 10:20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 1Co 10:21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils. 1Co 10:22 Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?*

“God is Spirit” declares Jesus and as such must be worshipped in spirit. *Joh 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.* This should make us see the difficulty of representing God the Spirit in any specific way. True He may take a form or represent Himself in emblems i.e. oil, water, fire etc. *Luk 3:21 Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, Luk 3:22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.* These though are manifestations to lead us to consider the nature of the Person.

Idolatry arises when making an image of God. *Exo 32:2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. Exo 32:3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. Exo 32:4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. Exo 32:5 And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD.*

1. God being infinite and eternal is not bound by space. Space is itself part of creation – creation into nothing.
2. God is not bound by time being alpha and omega.
3. God is not made of the matter of the universe, having existence before he created it.

How impossible is it then to embrace the concept of God in the span of a man's hands – God is not the work of man's hands! We must further be taught to consider the essence of God rather than speculate on His structure, we must learn His attributes for by these He is characterised to us as the true God.

The “invisible” nature of God has, by coming from His hands, found form in the creation.

- *Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*
- *Psa 19:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*
- *Psa 97:6 The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory.*

The Epistle to the Romans does not imply that all men see the Divinity in Nature or that it can be interpreted without the Spirit of God. *Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.* This is dealing more specifically with an enlightened group who hold truth (see William Kelly – Roman's p 10-12).

What did Solomon speak about concerning the trees? The things of God explained by the wisdom given to him. *1Ki 4:33 And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. 1Ki 4:34 And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.*

### Christ is Jehovah

There is not one single thing in the creation which can be said to be 'God' yet the Creator's Divinity is manifest in diverse ways, a coat of many colours, through His Creation. Note here that God's prohibition on sinful men making representations of God does not stop God from representing Himself as He will. This further raises the question, that if God cannot adequately be represented by a single created object, how can Christ be God?

Before answering that question regarding Christ as God, let us make some remarks.

- i. Many of the misrepresentations of Jesus come from a misunderstanding of Divine Revelation that is, the Scripture, with possibly an additional mixture of devilish humanist philosophy (i.e. external rationalisation). Temporal laws, relations and analogies are used to explain the transcendent, infinite spirit of God.
- ii. The Scriptures are often used to prove things that are not in the context. Revelation has purpose and limitations, hence the Bible does not appear or claim to be the complete handbook of biology, science or astronomy. John limits his Gospel revelation to prove that Jesus is the Son of God for our salvation. *Joh 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* John does not set out to discuss the metaphysics of the incarnation, new birth, salvation, or the person and work of Christ.

In his epistles John writes from the 'other side of justification', to CONFIRM in the believer what has happened to those in Christ (a sequel to the gospel). *1Jn 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.* So then, in delineating Christ we should be mindful of the scope, context and purpose of our material and be careful how we reason.

The Bible does not describe God in absolute detail neither does it appear to set out to do so. It does though make a clear statement of the essential differences between man and God by the entrance of sin, as Zophar the Naamathite said: *Job 11:7 Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? Job 11:8 It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? Job 11:9 The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.*

In the early church conflict soon arose around the nature of Christ, due to a rationalistic approach. When we see the Son of Man on earth, we are confronted with the Father, *Joh 14:9 Jesus saith unto*

*him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? When we are saved we do not consciously get confronted with the totality of the knowledge of God, knowledge grows but we have the certainty of having seen the Father and been in His presence.*

With Jesus we have the eternal Logos, who is God, taking upon Himself the form of man, for a specific duty. As the servant of Jehovah He was to redeem the elect and destroy the works of the devil. *Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God..... 1Jn 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*

We may observe in His life the following highlights.

1. Perfect Humanity (man) without sin.
2. Perfect Divinity, Emmanuel, God with us.
3. The unity of both in the Son of God.
4. His mission as:
  - PROPHET
  - PRIEST
  - KING

*Isa 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.* This hints at the two natures of Christ, The Son from everlasting, given as the child born in time. This of course is the start of confusion. If Christ (the Son) is 'begotten', it appears to make Him subordinate and created with respect to the eternal Jehovah. But if we look to our Bibles there is not one scripture that makes Jesus a 'begotten god' or makes His deity derived or generated from an original deity. Here the concept of "begotten" must be examined.

#### Names applied to Christ

First born, prototokos. *Luk 2:7 And she brought forth her firstborn (πρωτοτόκος = prōtotokos) son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.* This clearly implies the physical generation from Mary. When used by God it has a regenerative sense and makes Christ pre-eminent by resurrection not by physical creation. First born from among the dead. *Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn (πρωτοτόκος = prōtotokos) from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*

Monogenes, only begotten, Fils unique (Fr). *Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten (μονογενής = monogenēs) of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* This again does not refer to creation but to standing or position as shown in Hebrews. *Heb 11:17 By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten (μονογενής = monogenēs) son.* Isaac was preeminent, but not the first born son – Christ is thus in relationship to the Father the preeminent son – our chief brother?

‘Begot’ (γεννάω = gennaō). Here the word is used often of paternal “begetting” in the flesh – i.e. In the generations. *Mat 1:2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren.* When God applies it to Christ it is again the resurrection that is before us. Man’s use and God’s use of a word is a lesson to us. *Act 13:33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* The day Jesus arose was prophesied as the day that He was begotten from the dead.

Thus when God is related to Christ as Father to Son and the terms “first born” and “only begotten” are used, they do not refer to the creation of or bringing into consciousness the Christ, the Eternal Word. They are terms that classify His relationship to the Father as He is the Mediator and Servant. He already exists before these terms are applied to Him.

Arius in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century conceived of Christ as a lesser god. He drew a picture of one God – one person and a subordinate son. Jesus was lowered and humanised. This was error and sin based upon incomplete exegesis using a few scriptures:

- *Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:*
- *Joh 14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*
- *Mar 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

The Arian conflict caused a council to gather at Nicea in 325 AD to resolve the issues and one Athanasius emerged as the champion of what we might call orthodoxy although he was in a minority. “Athanasius against all the world and all the world against Athanasius” was a common phrase. Yet Arianism was not annihilated. It exists today in UNITARIANISM Jehovah’s Witnesses, Russellites, Mormons and many other false religions.

Our expressions of Christ’s Divinity should make us careful in our approach (remember our earlier remarks on interpretation). I now want to build a picture of Christ using the epistles rather than the gospels. This will make it clearer who Jesus is.

- *2Co 8:8 I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. 2Co 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*
- *Eph 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: Eph 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.*
- *Php 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Php 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: Php 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

- *Php 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Php 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: Php 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; Php 2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
- *Col 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. Col 1:19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; Col 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*
- *Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Heb 1:4 Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*
- *Heb 2:5 For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. Heb 2:6 But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Heb 2:7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Heb 2:8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. Heb 2:9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. Heb 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. Heb 2:11 For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Heb 2:12 Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. Heb 2:13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Heb 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; Heb 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Heb 2:16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Heb 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Heb 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

- *Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*
- *Heb 5:5 So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. Heb 5:6 As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Heb 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Heb 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; Heb 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Heb 5:10 Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.*

What then think ye of Christ – whose son is He? *Joh 20:27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. Joh 20:28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.*

### Aspects of Christ

In looking at the Command not to represent God with idols, we saw how God manifested Himself to men in the incarnation of Christ. I think we shall only have time to tackle one of the questions that is left over. That is the statement of John. *Joh 14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*

How can Christ be God, yet ‘apparently’ less than the Father in greatness? The confusion which often assaults us is not a new thing to God’s people. *Act 8:34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?* The eunuch sees a number of possibilities for the passage in Isaiah that he is reading.

He was:

1. Confused as to the meaning.
2. Shows us the possible diversity of meaning of scripture.
3. Gives us hope because God personally rewards his diligence.

The section that the Eunuch was searching has a particular relevance, because the position of Eunuchs in God’s scheme was changed by the work of Christ. *Isa 56:3 Neither let the son of the stranger, that hath joined himself to the LORD, speak, saying, The LORD hath utterly separated me from his people: neither let the eunuch say, Behold, I am a dry tree.* It must have some historic fulfilment to establish his position as acceptable to God.

Philip supplied the answer, not a simple “Yes, he is speaking of Jesus”, but he puts the pearl of great price in the Divine necklace. *Act 8:35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.* He expounds the context of the prophecy, “the glad tidings of Jesus”. Going back to the section the Eunuch read. *Isa 52:13 Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall*

*be exalted and extolled, and be very high.* There is a statement about a SERVANT. The Eunuch thought the prophet might have spoken of himself.

David speaks for Christ (e.g. Psalm 110), or rather Christ speaks through David, as Peter shows. *Act 2:34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand.* The Jews, not all of them and with some warrant saw the servant of Jehovah as the Nation personified (Israel the servant).

- *Isa 41:8 But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Isa 41:9 Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Isa 41:10 Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*
- *Isa 43:10 Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.*
- *Isa 44:1 Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen: Isa 44:2 Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen. Isa 44:3 For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.*

The nation of Israel does not reach the ideal of righteousness. The nation certainly could not atone for the sins of mankind. *Isa 53:11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.* Particularly as God had at the start of Isaiah declared the nation more ignorant than animals about God and like a sick leper as regards sin – scarlet. *Isa 1:3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.....Isa 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

This shows how righteous some Jews thought they were and how they falsely conceived a relationship to God. Like the Pharisees, right in their own eyes. The less the Nation represents the righteous God, the more God reveals the prophetic ideal. 'One' comes to our focus who is RIGHTEOUS and who personifies the Nation. The faithful and righteous servant – the Messiah!

God is thus pleased, like the mighty man of valour to reveal His choice over weapons. *Isa 49:1 Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The LORD hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. Isa 49:2 And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me; Isa 49:3 And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified. Isa 49:4 Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God. Isa 49:5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be*



not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. Isa 49:6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth. Isa 49:7 Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee. "A polished staff hidden in a quiver", waiting to be fitted to God's bow and deal the death blow to death and sin. God is thus as to Paul "pleased to reveal His son. Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, Gal 1:16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.

God illustrates elsewhere how Jesus personifies the nation.

1. **The seed**, the Nation of the OT is in its perfection. Gen 15:5 And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. Gen 17:14 And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant. Gal 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.....Gal 3:17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.
2. **The Vineyard**. Israel is the vineyard and Christ is the vine. Isa 5:1 Now will I sing to my wellbeloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard. My wellbeloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: Isa 5:2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.....Isa 5:3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard. Isa 5:4 What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? Isa 5:5 And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down: Isa 5:6 And I will lay it waste: it shall not be pruned, nor digged; but there shall come up briers and thorns: I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. Isa 5:7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry. Joh 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.
3. **The Light**. Here in Isaiah chapter 53 the OT Nations should have revealed God to the world but when the light dimmed another arose. Isa 9:2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Luk 2:29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: Luk 2:30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Luk 2:31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; Luk 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

Isaiah chapter 53 has been called the “bad conscience” of the synagogue, for many have rejected its clear witness of Christ. Here the Messiah was seen in lowliness *even as a leper cut off, Isa 53:8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken* (נִגַּף = nega = the spot of leprosy.) Oppressed, smitten, marred and rejected. This is the Saviour of the Nation a totally wretched figure. How can this be God, how can the redeemer be God?

*Isa 54:4 Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. Isa 54:5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called. Isa 54:6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. Isa 54:7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. Isa 54:8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; **but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer.***

Jehovah is maker, husband, redeemer, Holy one, God of the whole earth, all of which may be seen to apply to Jesus in the NT. Jesus who made the worlds, redeemed us, washed us and prepares is for Himself as husband. The servant then although not ‘seeming’ to be God is quite clearly God. So in the fullness of time God shakes the heavens and all human wisdom and reason. The folly of the chase is established. Christ took the form of a servant although He was God, He lowered Himself to exalt us!

*Psa 40:6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Psa 40:7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, Psa 40:8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. Psa 40:9 I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. Psa 40:10 I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*

Let us consider Philippians chapter 2, *Php 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:* which says:

- Christ was in the form of God.
- He did not, as it were hold His equality above the consideration for us sinners. What a measure of love to a wicked world.
- He made Himself of no repute. How could you lose your attributes if they were part of you? How could Christ have poured out His omnipotence, yet have been the same eternal Jesus Christ? No the emptying is better rendered as “made nothing” or “no repute”.
- He was found in the outward appearance of a man.

All this is a long way from an exchange of form, God for man! Christ becomes God incarnate, “see in flesh God” as the hymn writer says “veiled in flesh the Godhead see, hail the incarnate deity”. We have thus the fulfilment of the prophecy of Emmanuel, God with us. God not emptied of deity which is an impossibility, but God veiled in flesh. Like the Shekinah in the tabernacle of Israel we see Jesus. It was Jehovah Himself shining out of that humiliation. *Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of*

*grace and truth.* Here is the perfect blending of the Divine and human natures in one person, so as we cannot detect the boundaries or split the vision.

Try and bear all this in mind as we look at what John says. *Joh 14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.* Is the Father greater in respect of His essence that is His essential attributes? Clearly not! Many times in John the Father and Son are shown in that essential unity. *Joh 10:29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. Joh 10:30 I and my Father are one.* This shows the redemptive oneness and Paul in Philippians showed the eternal equality of the God head and equal form.

Therefore I suggest that John cannot be talking about Jesus and the Father in the terms of paternal pre-eminence of the Father with respect to God communicating His nature to a created son. The greater Father is not greater in that He was first and that He made Jesus and that Jesus is a lesser God! It must remain then that the greatness of the Father is at the time of speaking, in relationship to the son Jesus as yet not glorified.

The disciples show this love to Jesus by rejoicing in His going away – Why? It is because Jesus was held in humiliation and to desire that He should not depart, but remain held, was no love to Him. No Christian should rejoice in His humiliation, we should mourn. We may rejoice though in His mercy and it is only in the resurrection and ascension that we see our Lord in His true position of glory, the glory He has before the world was. *Php 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.*

Jesus then goes to the Father to be glorified upon His throne – this is our rejoicing. His humiliation for our filthy ways is our sorrow! So Christ enters the virgin, to be born in flesh and reveal the Father to men, to suffer and die, to rise and return to glory. The Father is greater during the time of “His flesh” in respect to His humiliation, not His essence.

The servant having glorified the Lord is glorified and exalted, so that going to the Father is going to His own greatness. *Isa 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Isa 9:7 Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.*

Perhaps we have a lesson in our own time about making much of the suffering of man and too little of the glorified God. The balance in worship lies in seeing the greatness of Christ in all His work.

### Christ – The LOGOS

In forbidding man to make representations in graven images for false worship, God did not limit Himself, but reserved by this Command the Divine Right to reveal Himself. In the fullness of time Christ our mediator was revealed. We have shown the coequality of Christ with Jehovah and Elohim of the OT and generated two further questions in the process.

1. If Christ be God how can the Father be greater? *Joh 14:28 Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.*
2. How can Christ appear ignorant of Divine knowledge? *Mar 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.*

The first point was dealt with by looking at the servant of Jehovah, Jesus coequal and coeternal with the Father and without subordination to His Divinity. In redemption the servant under humiliation is voluntarily subordinate in the economy of Redemption.

Now we look at the second point. I have a “Young Persons Catechism” which starts with the question “who made me?” and the answer is ‘God made me’. Obvious to the saint and profound in its simplicity. John starts the Gospel in the same way as if answering the question; Who made me? *Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God. Joh 1:3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.* The Logos, The Word, is set in His pre-eminent position as Creator. Who is the Logos who made me? Answer: He is Christ.

The logos of life (ζωή = zōē) not bios. Zoe is the highest form of life, intensive as opposed to bios which is extensive. *1Jn 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (βίος = bios), is not of the Father, but is of the world..... Joh 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life (ζωή = zōē) through his name.*

Jesus the Logos is not an ideological concept, an attribute of God, but the real person, God Himself capable of being touched when incarnate. *Luk 24:39 Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.* Perhaps John has this very event in mind.

In Revelation the same Logos comes in power and judgement, King of Kings and Lord of Lords and the Lamb has the same honours. *Rev 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. Rev 19:12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. Rev 19:13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. Rev 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. Rev 19:15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. Rev 19:16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.....Rev 17:14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.*

The Lamb overcomes as the true sacrifice of God, a Lordly powerful sacrifice, just as the word is Lordly and powerful. Jehovah is Lord of Lords. *Deu 10:17 For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.*

So in John we see Christ as the pre-incarnate, incarnate and glorified Logos. *Rev 19:13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.* He who was, who is and who is to come.

When Christ speaks of Himself as before Abraham, He is speaking not as the INCARNATE LOGOS, but as the PRE-EXISTENT LOGOS. *Joh 8:58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.* Therefore we must acknowledge that when the Son of God speaks He may predicate (or take to Himself) or affirm to His person what is true only of His Eternal Divinity (the pre-incarnate Logos). The statement about Abraham did not refer to Abraham being younger than the incarnate Logos or Jesus the son of David after the flesh. The Jews took it this way. The Jews not acknowledging Christ as God take Him to speak at the person of man or in His humanity.

Jesus may then speak out of His person as God, of things which are not true of His humanity but do nevertheless apply to His person. Likewise as a man, hunger and thirst are affirmed by the same person, true only of the son of man, His humanity, but not His Divinity. Christ has human nature and Divine nature in one person and as a person He may speak out of His humanity or out of His Divinity, but whatever is said relates to the one PERSON – Jesus Christ.

This Johannine Logos comes to communicate life and light. In the Gospel this is the purpose of John to reveal Christ as Son of God and Eternal Life. *Joh 20:30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: Joh 20:31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* To this end the title "Word" is very appropriate.

A word conveys a concept from one mind to another, in this case in Christ the truth of God is manifest to our minds in this person. Jesus is the revelation of God's will. *Joh 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. Joh 12:48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.* The WORD or LOGOS is thus a very apt designation.

In Genesis, the word of God bought physical existence and in an apparently similar fashion John uses the terms of Genesis to look at the New Creation and New Birth or Spirit Life. The beginning of John though, preceded Genesis, and the Socinians are wrong to make John 1:1 refer to the beginning of the Gospel. John goes back to the beginning of cyclic time, unlike Luke and Matthew who trace Jesus back to His humanity in Adam. Thus starting at the beginning John infuses Christ into history. The eternal God, the Logos, the Light, the Life enters the dark world to reprove its evil.

Jesus is contrast with the greatest of the prophets. John the Baptist is the Voice – Jesus is the word. John is a lamp - Christ is the light.

The word of God John says was God not just Divine, but God and in Eternity was "face to face" with God. The preposition "with" or GREEK deserves study. Not IN or OF or INTO or TOGETHER. 'With' (πρός = pros) plus accusative signifies the accompaniment with. The Divine Nature of the Logos is clear to us and should be stressed.

*Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* This statement of Christ was so valued, that it was used as a benediction over the sick and over

Christened infants, even being written on amulets to guard against sickness. We in turn, should guard it from perversion by the modern Unitarians who relegate Christ to the second division of created being.

The OT Messianic concepts had embraced the idea of the Logos with many Jews. In the Targums or Chaldee paraphrases (which arose in the post Exilic period when Hebrew was becoming a lost tongue), the synagogues made interpretations (Targums) to aid the reader. These commentaries became books in their own right.

In *Psalm 110:1 A Psalm of David. The LORD (Jehovah) said unto my Lord (Adonai), Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* The Targums used 'mimra' (מִמְרָא (Aramaic) = mē'mar) instead of the Hebrew 'Adonai', so that the Psalm became "Jehovah said unto HIS WORD". John's use of Logos was not an innovation.

This Logos declared the Father from His bosom (*εἰς* = *eis* plus accusative) *Joh 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom (εἰς τὸν κόλπον) of the Father, he hath declared him. Luk 16:22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried.* Perhaps from the idea of reclining upon the bosom as a mark of love and affection. *Son 1:13 A bundle of myrrh is my wellbeloved unto me; he shall lie all night betwixt my breasts.* As Gill says "Persons out of sight are too apt to be forgotten... thus persons often put things into their bosoms, which they would not lose."

Christ the Logos was not out of this favour with God during His incarnation and as the only begotten, unique son, He remains the joy of His Father. How could God the Father find anything displeasing in the Son?

Now we have here in John chapter 1 a statement similar to Philippians. *Php 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* He took the form of a servant and was found in the fashion of a man. God did not lay off His Divinity or form. As John shows us this Logos who is God, became flesh and tabernacled with us; God and man. *Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* The Logos was not transformed for this, not reduced, mutilated, but was the same Logos.

The son of God did not unite Himself with a person, but took the form of a man, human nature without sin. It was not a mixture of Divine and human to produce a third person. (Hodge Systematic Th. Vol 2 p 388). The Christ, the Logos of eternity is the same Logos, unchanged, but manifest in humanity, and the Divine and human natures are not mixed, but each retains their properties in one person. In Christ we do not have the Divine nature assuming flesh, but the Divine person assuming flesh.

As to His **humanity** we see His sinlessness yet subject to hunger, thirst, tiredness, growth, sleep, sorrow, tears, age, pain, having blood and flesh. Mentally His humanity grew in wisdom. So then, whatsoever infirmities are right to make a man, are present with Him to perfectly unite with us in all things. He cannot otherwise be a faithful High Priest.

- *Heb 2:16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Heb 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren,*

*that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Heb 2:18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.*

- *Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

All things relevant to humanity were present in Him.

As to the **Logos** (God), we see ample proof shining through this person. Power to forgive sin, over creation, miracles, resurrections, heart knowledge, God is in this servant. We have attributes of God and man in one person. The creeds express what we have said more compactly.

How then does Jesus 'not know the hour' of the end. *Mar 13:32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.* The son of man speaks of His coming. *Mar 13:26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.*

Is it the Logos denying knowledge of the day and hour? If so Christ is not the same essence with the Father for He cannot be omniscient. If however as we see Him as the servant, He is speaking of His humanity it is clear. Now just what the Logos communicated to His humanity in knowledge is not clearly answered, being bound up in the covenant of redemption between Father and son.

The limitations of revelation to men is laid out in John. *Joh 8:28 Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.* Christ as servant, subordinate in the economy of redemption, was to reveal such things as the Father was pleased to tell man.

Mark 13 verse 32 is clearly something not known by the servant for revelation. It must have been known by the Logos or else we have destroyed His Divinity. I put this verse in the heading of the Christ predicating or affirming to Himself what is true, only of His humanity, as son of man and not of His Divinity.

### **Creeds: On the Mediator.**

**Baptist Confession 1689, chapter 8.2:** The son of God, the second person of the Holy Trinity, being very and eternal God, the brightness of the Father's glory, of one substance and equal with Him who made the world, who upholdeth and governeth all things He hath made, did when the fullness of time was come, take up Himself man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, without sin... so that two whole, perfect and distinct natures were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion, which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ only mediator between God and man.

**Savoy (Independent Congress 1658. Chapter 8.2):** The son of God, the second person in the Trinity, very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did when the fullness of time was come take to Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof yet without sin,... so that the whole perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and manhood, were

inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition of confusion, which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ only mediator between God and man.

**Westminster Confession 8.2:** The son of God, the second person in the Trinity, very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did when the fullness of time was come take to Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof yet without sin,... so that the whole perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition of confusion, which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ only mediator between God and man.

**39 Articles of Religion Article 2:** The Son which is the WORD of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God and the substance within the Father took man's nature in the womb of the blessed virgin of her substance so that the two whole and perfect natures, that is to say the Godhead and manhood were joined together in one person never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man.

**Chalcedon AD 451.** We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable (rational) soul and body; consubstantial (coessential) with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather of the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God, the Word the Lord Jesus Christ; as the prophets from the beginning (have declared) concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.

The apostle John stressed in his Gospel the nature of the son of God. *Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

In his epistle he appeals to the confession of Christ's human nature as an article of faith. *1Jn 4:1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 1Jn 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 1Jn 4:3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 1Jn 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 1Jn 4:5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 1Jn 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.*



Antichrists are not simply those who reject His Divinity as the son of God. *1Jn 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 1Jn 2:23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.* The problems of the complex person of Jesus were already present in the day of John and will no doubt continue until the end of the age.

What then may we apply this doctrine of Christ to practically? Firstly we should consider the target of our conformity. *1Co 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. 1Co 10:32 Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: 1Co 10:33 Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. 1Co 11:1 Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.*

Religions or cults create targets and make laws which are often unreal and undefined. They mould their own excuses for failure and create license for excess. They have their esoteric procedures which cannot be factually examined. Here with Christ we have a public example of Godly living. It is well defined, practical and obtainable. The righteousness of faith is not in a secret cavern. *Rom 10:6 But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) Rom 10:7 Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) Rom 10:8 But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; Rom 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Rom 10:10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

Because of Jesus' perfect humanity we may identify with Him, but more particularly – He with us. *Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. Heb 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

We may overcome the world with Christ, not just theoretically or judicially, but practically, "His cry not forward, but follow" - William Guthrie. *1Jn 3:19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 1Jn 3:20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 1Jn 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. 1Jn 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.*

We see in the life of Christ one of the mysteries of God. God did not annihilate the devil or fallen man to remove sin from heaven, in an instant of omnipotent wrath. The fire did not come from heavens glory with the angels fighting. God took a 'house of clay' and met satan with the limitations of our frail nature. The hedge between us and the father was removed. *Job 1:9 Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Job 1:10 Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. Job 1:11 But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. Job 1:12 And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he*

*hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD. Like Samson of old, Jesus won the victory in death.*

We, in gaining that fellowship with God the Father, renewed by the justifying power of Christ's death may in turn bruise satan. It was not simply at the cross that satan was smitten, but at every application of the cross in the children of the devil. Satan was bruised in me and you and shall be continually as we grow in grace. We are well equipped. *Eph 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Eph 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him. Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Eph 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*

God does not want a defeated army, He does not want capitulation where sin is involved. Error has no place in the children of mercy and where it is seen it must be rooted out. God wants conquerors! Every church of the seven churches requires that it is 'in Christ'. We 'conquer' and it is not only Johanine, but Pauline teaching. How can catholics still venture uncertainty.

- **John:** *Rev 2:3 And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted. 1Jn 5:4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*
- **Paul:** *Rom 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Rom 8:36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Rom 8:37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. Rom 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Rom 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Secondly, through Christ we gain an insight into what the "image" of God consists of.

1. Christ is the image of God. *2Co 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*
2. We are conformed to Christ's image. *Rom 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

The promises of scripture (of God) assure us of this. The Gospel promises us this, *2Pe 1:4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

In stooping to us and taking humanity, Christ has laid the bridge whereby He may elevate us to God. It is not a New Testament thought, Zechariah promises it. *Zec 12:8 In that day shall the LORD defend*

*the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the LORD before them. God bows that we might rise.*

Our humanity will bear such marks of Divine nature as God may communicate (yet such things as 'life in our self', 'omnipotence', and 'worship' are His alone – even in glory we shall remain dependent, yet free in the highest sense for we shall do His will). True freedom requires laws and the highest most perfect conformity is to the law of God.

In life we scratch about to make images for ourselves and comforts, as if this life was the end, but we are to be more solicitous for our eternal preparation and to this end Christ provides the catalogue from which we may desire the virtues and graces. "Come buy", He cries. *Isa 55:1 Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, **come, buy** wine and milk without money and without price. Isa 55:2 Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Isa 55:3 Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*

It is not for man to provide for God what he thinks is best, or to beseech God to be conformed to His offering. God never bent to Cain and shall never bow to what we give outside of Christ. *Gen 4:5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.* Idolatry is in part, self aggrandisement, egocentric worship! No wonder God forbids it! There is an example in the OT which shows how men by conceit are led away to project themselves upon the nations. In Daniel 2, by common grace (and common curse), Nebuchadnezzar is promised dominion. *Dan 2:37 Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory.*

The golden head becomes the golden idol. Nebuchadnezzar extends his power into the future and in doing so deifies himself. This was the culmination of a career in Rome. Caesar declares himself Divine (you cannot go higher). As he went in procession, he had a man next to him who said "remember you are a man". What he was saying in reality is that you are a God. The image of Nebuchadnezzar is a focus for the nation. The failure to worship the image did not put you into God's hands you fell into Nebuchadnezzar's hands. You had offended by your irreverence. *Dan 3:15 Now if ye be ready that at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the image which I have made; well: but if ye worship not, ye shall be cast the same hour into the midst of a burning fiery furnace; and who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?* The great man is eventually brought to realise that Jehovah is sovereign and he but a beast in His power. He is like the king of Babylon. *Isa 14:12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!*

The fall ruined the moral image of God. We cannot spiritually claim the image of God and be a child of the devil. One image alone is permissible and it is not carved by the hand of man. It is reserved for God alone is the act of restoring man to His Divine image. The restoration renews the spirit of our mind. The new man is created in true righteousness and holiness. *Eph 4:22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; Eph 4:23 And*

*be renewed in the spirit of your mind; Eph 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

The image of God in Christ is holiness – the quality of truth and consistency and separation from error. The righteousness is the standing we have by Christ's atonement that gains us a position before God. We are then capable of seeing what is the mind of God.

Jesus is as Paul says:

1. wisdom from God,
2. Righteousness,
3. Holiness,
4. Redemption.

The qualities of Adam in the first creation are given to us in the new creation, with a greater blessing, that we shall never be deprived of. Adam was the first of mankind and the image of God in mankind is not expressed in the sexual differences. *Gen 5:2 Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created.* The image is moral and thus possessed or capable of possession by both man and woman.

This image is not restored to its maximum capacity in the instant of being reborn. Rather like a seed carrying all the properties of the mature plant as yet undeveloped, it grows. *Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Col 3:11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.* The image grows says Paul in knowledge. Knowledge of what?

1. Of His will. *Col 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.*
2. Of His person. *Col 1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.*
3. Of His son. *2Pe 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*

We are by this growing in knowledge as Christ is formed in us, conformed to the image of God and through this we have eternal life's purpose. *Joh 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.* As James Butler Stoney said "You must have got the mind of God in its breadth before you understand the mind of God."

The sum of the matter then is this. Man was created in the image of God, through sin this image was killed such that it needed renewing from death. The sinful man focuses around the perversions of the image of God, for in his blindness he "has a heart without understanding and darkened". It was corrupt for all flesh has corrupted its way upon earth. *Gen 6:12 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.*

Idolatry is a figment of this perversion. It shows a deficiency in knowledge and a deficiency in will so as to conform to the Creator's word. In Christ the image is restored. Here is the only image permissible. The image is not conformed to us in idolatry but we are conformed to the image. By this restorative work, we are capable of rendering to the Father true worship and glory. Lets us observe Johns warning. *1Jn 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.*

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> COMMAND

*Exo 20:4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Exo 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; Exo 20:6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.*

This Command enjoins us against;

1. The submission of man to any visible replica of creation,
2. The worship of the creature and the works of his own hands.
3. The equality of God with any temporal and derived object. (Thus it condemns comparative religion).

For the Christian to combat this sin, it is necessary to derive its root. The creation (temporal universe) is most certainly the work of God that reflects His “Divinity and Power” (Roman’s Chapter 1). The law structure as a consequence would bear a resemblance to the operations of Divine perfection. The creation must be a form of revelation. *Psa 19:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. **The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.***

Let us pause to consider a point that has raised conflict. It is the question of Natural theology. By that I mean, is the Christian belief is the only way to the knowledge of God or might it be possible to get it through natural means? It has led to a concept of mixed articles and pure articles of faith.

1. Pure article, for example the Trinity or Christ revealed only by special revelation.
2. Mixed article, for example providence. This is a doctrine of God revealed in the natural experience of man (supposedly). But if we accept mixed articles, we may concede that man may make a genuine assessment of aspects of God whilst being of a sinful condition.

Is the mind of the natural man a stable platform on which to work? **I say emphatically no!** Because the mind needs literally metamorphosing. *Rom 12:2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* The word transform is descriptive of Christ’s transfiguration. *Mar 9:2 And after six days Jesus taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.*

The natural man cannot determine the will of God and I suggest also, cannot determine the nature of God. In scripture we have the nature of God shown in His will for us. “Be ye holy... Do not commit...” My conclusion is that “nature” or **the natural realm of creation, offers no certain knowledge of God outside of Christ** (revealed in faith). We must have the mind of Christ before we can even hope to focus on God’s handiwork. Faith must interpret nature. Nature can never interpret faith.

I hereby reject “Natural Theology” as a ‘science’ and incidentally any system of morals/ethics derived by custom, observation of creation or man’s mind. Consequently it must follow that any system of Natural Philosophy or law that does not come out of faith is derived by natural man. *1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Only an open heart can attend. *Act 16:14*

*And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.*

It is impossible to debate with a natural man because his mind is corrupted.

I digress to make two points of clarification.

1. Natural man may stumble over Divine truths – but it will be a stumbling and confusion depending on the degree of revelation.
2. I do not confuse “natural science” with natural theology. Natural science is a branch of science which deals with the physical world, e.g. physics, chemistry, geology, biology. Natural theology is about what our experiences say about God. For example because we can conceive of a mathematical relationship for the energy structure of an atom, does not prove that God is subject to energy change in Himself, it teaches nothing of God without first knowing God. I may scientifically classify a tool shed, but because certain tools are there, it does not tell me the trade or nature of the owner.

I conclude the digression, by saying that the second Command is expressly against the natural theology, as a means of defining God and the service that God requires. We must look beyond the stars. *Job 31:26 If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; Job 31:27 And my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: Job 31:28 This also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.*

Why though do men commit idolatry? Is it just religious myopia? I think that men like to have a control over their destiny and society. To this end he will raise up ‘gods’ and debase Divinity. *Dan 3:3 Then the princes, the governors, and captains, the judges, the treasurers, the counsellors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces, were gathered together unto the dedication of the image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Dan 3:4 Then an herald cried aloud, To you it is commanded, O people, nations, and languages, Dan 3:5 That at what time ye hear the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick, ye fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king hath set up: Dan 3:6 And whoso falleth not down and worshippeth shall the same hour be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. Jdg 17:5 And the man Micah had an house of gods, and made an ephod, and teraphim, and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest.* By it man is expressing confidence in his own works and power to shape his destiny.

It is religious self service – “dead works”. True worship is ‘live works’ and the change is brought about by a work on the conscience (a purification of the conscience) and heart and mind. *Act 7:41 And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, **purge your conscience** from dead works to serve the living God?*

It is very difficult to define ‘man’ as he is a complex being. We use terms like mind, will, understanding, conscience, guilt; with very little understanding of their biblical use. We call them sometimes faculties i.e. faculty of conscience, as if it were a specific organ in the body. I would prefer to call them aspects of man as he functions.

1. **The conscience** is man knowing and exercising his knowledge – it may be good or evil. *1Ti 1:19 Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck. Heb 10:22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.* We sometimes confuse guilt and conscience.
2. **Guilt** is a man as he is condemned in his mind by the conflict of action and principle. The term guilty conscience is really meaningless. The “will” likewise is not the faculty of determining, but rather man as he consciously desires to act. That “will” is never free and man’s acts outside of his will even in the new creature. The will is not dominant. *Rom 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. Rom 7:19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Rom 7:20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. Rom 7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. Rom 7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

So we have in man an ability to know and assimilate truth (conscience) and a limited ability to self determine (according to our knowledge), an ability to act (will) but never freely.

Superimposed upon man, unknown by nature are laws. *Rom 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* The law of sin being the one law existing in the members conflicting actions with principles. *Rom 7:25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*

The knowledge of the law of sin is a killer and conflicts with faith. The seeds of idolatry are present in all men. Whence this law? It is certainly a judicial sentence, but if it is imposed and resides solely in the flesh, we have a conflict in the person of Christ. He could not have been subject to the law of sin as Paul was. *Rom 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.*

Christ was tempted but did not sin. His flesh likewise did not have a law that controlled His actions in an involuntary way, so where does this law of sin arise?

At this time I would suggest, it arises from the imperfections of knowledge and ability to conform to God’s law. Apart from grace, all come under its power. Christ could not, without denying His omniscience and omnipotence.

So we, not having by nature the ability to control our bodily functions and appetites, are captivated by the law of sin. *Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

A man who lives by appetites will destroy his ability to understand and reason (a brute beast). *Jud 1:7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Jud 1:8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak*



evil of dignities. *Jud 1:9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. Jud 1:10 But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves. Jud 1:11 Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.*

The body will dominate the mind and pervert the truth. *1Ti 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 1Ti 4:3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.*

Here then if we recap we have the possible sequence to idolatry.

1. Our natural functions must be governed by the law of God.
2. Ungoverned functions fulfil their pleasure lawlessly.
3. The reprobation of God is pronounced.
4. The creature is hardened.
5. The carnal desire dominates and brings sin. *Jas 1:15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.*
6. Understanding is warped and conscience cauterised. *1Ti 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.*
7. The creature now dominates faith by his desires.

This is idolatry. *1Sa 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.* To avoid idolatry mankind must subject the creation to the law order of God and be subject himself. *Gen 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*

The pattern of the true order is not found in self, it is not found in creation, it is found in the revelation of God. It requires knowledge – not feeling. The religion of “feelings” is the modern idolatry but we walk by faith – not sight.

#### Isaiah's description of idolatry

*Isa 44:9 Those people who make idols are nothing themselves, and the idols they treasure are just as worthless. Worshipers of idols are blind, stupid, and foolish. Isa 44:10 Why make an idol or an image that can't do a thing? sa 44:11 Everyone who makes idols and all who worship them are mere humans, who will end up sadly disappointed. Let them face me in court and be terrified. Isa 44:12 A metalworker shapes an idol by using a hammer and heat from the fire. In his powerful hand he holds a hammer, as he pounds the metal into the proper shape. But he gets hungry and thirsty and loses his strength. Isa 44:13 Some woodcarver measures a piece of wood, then draws an outline. The idol is carefully carved with each detail exact. At last it looks like a person and is placed in a temple. Isa 44:14 Either cedar, cypress, oak, or any tree from the forest may be chosen. Or even a pine tree planted by the woodcarver and watered by the rain. Isa*

*44:15 Some of the wood is used to make a fire for heating or for cooking. One piece is made into an idol, then the woodcarver bows down and worships it. Isa 44:16 He enjoys the warm fire and the meat that was roasted over the burning coals. Isa 44:17 Afterwards, he bows down to worship the wooden idol. "Protect me!" he says. "You are my god." Isa 44:18 Those who worship idols are stupid and blind! Isa 44:19 They don't have enough sense to say to themselves, "I made a fire with half of the wood and cooked my bread and meat on it. Then I made something worthless with the other half. Why worship a block of wood?" Isa 44:20 How can anyone be stupid enough to trust something that can be burned to ashes? No one can save themselves like that. Don't they realize that the idols they hold in their hands are not really gods? CEV.*

## The 1<sup>ST</sup> COMMAND

Let us be clear that the Mosaic covenant based around the 10 law words (דָּבָר = dābār) was given to a redeemed people. It is given to a people who have already knowledge of God and a historic expectation. *Gal 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. Gal 3:17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. Gal 3:18 For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise. Gal 3:19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*

The law is then pedagogic and sanctifying. It draws man to consider his creator – Christ. *Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

Pedagogic law is described by Paul, *Gal 3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. Rom 7:7 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.*

The law of Sinai will take this group of Abraham's descendents and establish them in a new position with God in regard to their status. *Exo 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.* The disclosures of God's knowledge separate the group to whom the revelations are made. *Gen 17:1 And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

Whenever there is a disclosure (or self disclosure) of the nature of God, there must necessarily follow a requirement of action (to do) and a sanction if contradicted. "Thou shalt not.." always carries a sentence for disobedience.

The Mosaic Law elevates people to a new communion with God. It is an endeavour to bring an inward and outward conformity to the true image of God by defining the boundaries of human action. *Col 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.*

The narrow path has the law as a boundary ditch, the ditch into which the blind will fall and so it is necessary to see in order to walk. We cannot suppose that outward conformity to the law is sufficient because we walk by faith not sight. It is the eye of faith that sees this road of conformity, which leads us into the presence of God.

Abraham looked for this, *Heb 11:10 For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Heb 11:13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen*

*them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Heb 11:14 For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. Heb 11:15 And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. Heb 11:16 But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.*

They could not know God by nature, because of sin. The way of faith is in conflict with the “sight of sinners”. *Heb 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

How do we, in this first Commandment, differentiate between God (Elohim) and Gods (Elohim)? The same word (a Hebrew plural)? I do so by establishing two points of dogma (decree) as an incontrovertible fact. I offer no physical proof because I cannot bring the evidence in a tangible form. The evidence is extra-temporal, it is spiritually discerned. *1Co 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 1Co 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

- Point 1. Repentance from dead works. *Heb 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.* It is the conscious knowledge of sin, the guilt of sin, the desire to escape the consequence and the acknowledging of the living works of Christ. *Heb 9:14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*
- Point 2. Faith in God. That is the acceptance of the existence of God, His self revelation and guidance. Faith in God is conversion. *Heb 11:9 By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.*

These two points we never justify.

1. Repentance,
2. Faith in God. That is that there is a revelation of God to be had and trusted in. We should never argue with the unbeliever on these. They are dogmas.

We can now proceed to examine more carefully the nature of this God on whom we pin all our hopes. Is He like other deities, is He part of pantheistic structure (e.g. like Egyptians), does He rule or is He in part ruled?

We go to the book in which the initial disclosure of repentance and faith were made (and spiritually confirmed in us as genuine). Does God in this book say things of Himself which cannot be substantiated? Does He boast omnipotence without offering proof? The predictive nature of the book and the historic continuity are bought before us. *Heb 1:1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Heb 1:2 Hath in these last days*

*spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.*

A generation is given a promise and time itself cannot alter the fulfilment of it. God masters time and events with historic proof. You could set your watch by it! *Isa 10:15 Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.*

You could set your watch by the Exodus. *Gen 15:13 And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. Exo 12:40 Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years.*

We may ask, did not Moses write these books? He was not about in Abram's day so he could have invented the dates. Paul though, uses this 430 years as evidence. *Gal 3:17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.*

Let us now go back to the point we made, how that we acknowledged repentance and faith in Christ. This was a spiritual testimony to the substance of the NT. The same NT writers claim to be speaking in the place of God. *Gal 1:15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, Gal 1:16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Gal 1:17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Gal 1:18 Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.*

Thus having trusted them on this most important point (Christ and salvation) we doubt not the genuineness of revelation elsewhere. John likewise (an eyewitness) confirms the genuineness of Moses. *Joh 5:45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.* So regarding the issue of Moses and his historic accuracy, we cannot doubt it even though it remains speculation as to how he gathered the data. There must have been an historic consciousness of God's promise, yet God confirmed the accuracy of the data.

The first Command becomes clearer as we define God and rejects gods.

There is however a further point I should like to bring out. It is that the first Command makes us conscious of the God who bought is "out of the house of bondmen". The Egyptians were equally bondmen! Here is a reason for the setting of Jehovah God apart because the conflict in Egypt with the false cult, culminates in the display of sovereignty at the Passover and the red sea (see Exodus chapter 15. It is the occasion of the first song of Scripture).

Not only are we to have no other "gods" but we see in the first Command the requirement to be God dependent. The impotence of Israel manifested the power of total dependence and magnified it. It is seen clearly with each Christian in our demonstration of total dependence upon Christ at Calvary.

It is when I am weak I am powerful. *2Co 12:10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.* It

is in this weak and dependent condition that the “thou shalt” become the “I will” in scripture. This is the enabling grace of God. *Isa 1:24 Therefore saith the Lord, the LORD of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies. Joh 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. Joh 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.*

It is in these conditions of individual impotence, that we see the great miracles of the Bible. Jacob wrestling with God, Abraham becoming a father and Samson gaining strength. Only when the resources of man are consumed do we get glimpses of sovereign power. Do we then trust in man and wait for man’s calling or do we wait for Gods calling?

It is the practical working knowledge of this 1<sup>st</sup> Command that allows God to exhibit further power.

1. Elijah is not deterred by being outnumbered and sees the full advantages of this as a time to Evangelise. Elijah is confident of God’s power in spite of the hopeless situation. He calls to mind the historic continuity of faith and rests in God. *1Ki 18:24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. 1Ki 18:36 And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. 1Ki 18:37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again.*
2. Daniel’s insistence on serving God, despite the interference of Kings (Daniel 6) is a measure of the man’s heart. He knew his priorities. The king had deified himself, ‘Caesar’ had asked too much so Daniel trusted to God for the consequences.

In the case of Daniel and Elijah the enemies of God are destroyed.

It is clearly a capital offence to disobey this 1<sup>st</sup> Command. *Deu 13:6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; Deu 13:7 Namely, of the God’s of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; Deu 13:8 Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: Deu 13:9 But thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people. Deu 13:10 And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.*

It raises the issue of religious freedom and false cults. Does witchcraft, necromancy, spiritism and false cults get the go ahead for free development in the New Testament? Does the Christian have an active duty to destroy false cults? I say yes. The religious tolerance of any society has led to its weakening by diluting its faith, by dividing its loyalties. The communists are in one sense right. Religion determines morality and so devilish cults and false religions remove us from the true observance of the 1<sup>st</sup> Command and further subvert the observance of other laws. Can we tolerate neutrality?

Should we tolerate false religion even though our heart is right? 2Ki 5:17 *And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD.* 2Ki 5:18 ***In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing.*** 2Ki 5:19 *And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.*

This appears to be the implication, it is a case of condoning by association and we are warned against this. 2Co 6:14 *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?* I would not draw too much from this. Naaman is, it appears, a proselyte and yet a babe in understanding. We know nothing of the conflicts of soul he was to have as his knowledge grew. Certainly the history of redemption warns us against all compromise.

Conclusion: The 1<sup>st</sup> Command demands:

1. Dependence.
  2. Discernment of Divine nature.
  3. Religious purity.
- *Exo 20:2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Exo 20:3 Thou shalt have no other God's before me.*
  - *Deu 5:6 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Deu 5:7 Thou shalt have none other God's before me.*

Finally at the pinnacle of the Commands we come to the uniqueness of God. We may glance at Thomas' statement in passing. Joh 20:28 *And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.* Many have relieved Christ of His essential Deity (co-equal with the Father and Spirit) and put Him in the class of 'a' god. But the Command forbids any gods *Exo 20:2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Exo 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.* Thomas then is either misguided (and uncorrected by Christ) or he has finally seen the true Godhead and Lordship of Jesus (there are no textual variants here).

There is one particular feature of our God in His uniqueness that we should now consider. If you agree with Westminster Larger Catechism Q 1 "What is the chief and highest end of man?" and reply "to glorify god and fully enjoy Him forever", you will discover why God created man, particularly His elect and what man is to do for his Lord. *Isa 43:7 Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him **for my glory**, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.* 1Co 10:31 *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, **do all to the glory of God.*** If we accept this practical definition of duty we must consider conversely the chief attribute of God (as far as we are bound) is His glory.

His personal glory is His alone, yet through judgement, in spite of man's vain efforts, the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of this glory. *Hab 2:12 Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by iniquity! Hab 2:13 Behold, is it not of the LORD of hosts that the people shall labour in the very fire, and the people shall weary themselves for very vanity? Hab 2:14 For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

The word 'glory' is spoken, often without understanding, like saying 'Hallelujah'. I recall the threat of the ebullient Billy Bray, that if he were locked in a barrel he would shout "glory" through the bung hole. What is glory? Millions of people at the turn of the century sang the "Glory Song" at the Chapman/Alexander crusades, "When by His grace, I shall look at His face, that will be glory, be glory for me" went the chorus. How many understood the word glory?

The English word glory is derived from the Latin Gloria which in the NT a Greek equivalent for 'glory' (κλέος = kleos) is used once. *1Pe 2:20 For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.* The meaning being rumour, report, fame, news.

We have also taken to rendering the other Greek word doxa (δόξα = doxa) for glory. This is derived from dokeo (δοκέω = dokeō) to seem, think, esteem hence Orthodox = right opinion. Unfortunately, the KJV has taken to rendering another word 'boast' as glory (καυχάομαι = kauchaomai). We shall not be considering this word as glory. *Rom 5:3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience.*

In the Hebrew OT the principle word for glory is cavod (כבוד = kâbôd). The root means to be heavy and hence the sense derived is to be heavy, sore, grievous, hardened, plentiful, numerous. Whatever the lexicons give us and the translators suppose to be the sense, we are still left with the task of extracting the meaning of glory. We thus look at the principle words doxa and cavod.

In its first occurrence the glory Jacob was acquiring from Laban was riches. *Gen 31:1 And he heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, Jacob hath taken away all that was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory.* It was the outward display of riches. The adornment of the individual, rather like the lily which made it more glorious than Solomon. The object (a flower) was not greater, but the array was. *Mat 6:28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: Mat 6:29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* The word splendour (Splendio – shine) perhaps conveys the sense.

Thus the appearance of the Glory of the Lord is as a fiery brightness. *Exo 24:17 And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.* The glory of God clearly has a visible manifestation. *Lev 9:23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the people.* It was capable of filling the house of the Lord. *2Ch 7:1 Now when Solomon had made an end of praying, the fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house.*

Ezekiel in his "vision of God" by Chebar sees the outward manifestation of the glory. *Eze 1:26 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it. Eze 1:27 And I saw as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about. Eze 1:28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness*



*round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.*

There is then an outward, visible appearance of glory, a splendour or aspect which is capable of distinguishing a person or body. *1Co 15:40 There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 1Co 15:41 There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory.*

This mark of brilliance, this glory is capable of blinding a man when it is revealed as of God, as it did to Paul. *Act 22:11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.* God might render humanity incapacitated by an instant of revelation of His Divine splendour, brilliance or glory. *Rev 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.*

The outward has an “inward” or perhaps I should say a spiritual significance. Glory may refer to outward manifestations as we have seen, or to moral character and status as we shall show.

Jude 8 and Peter render glory (doxa) as ‘dignities’ in this version. *2Pe 2:10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.* This is the quality of the person. The putative aspect (hence reputation from Puto: think), hence the reputation.

In the Hebrew one sense of glory is synonymous with the soul or perhaps the reputation of the individual as his totality of being. *Psa 7:5 Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah. Gen 49:6 O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall.*

This is more clearly expressed when Moses asks to see God’s glory. *Exo 33:17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name. Exo 33:18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory. Exo 33:19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.*

God’s reply causes His goodness to pass before him and lets His Name, the Name of Jehovah go before. This goodness (Heb. tov) is according to the Psalmist, seen in the providential care of His people, His loving kindness. *Psa 31:19 Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men! Psa 31:20 Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues. Psa 31:21 Blessed be the LORD: for he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a strong city.* He tells Moses “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will show mercy to who I will show mercy”. This act of will is necessary to God’s goodness, to implement it – sovereignty is an element of the Divine goodness.

This sovereignty is seen in the creation, *Psa 19:1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.* and by interpolation with Romans, *Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen,*

*being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.* Power and Divinity are part of that glory. Power as has been suggested before is derived from the law structure of creation and thus the legislative function comes into view as part of the glory of God.

I suggest, gathering the fragments that the glory of God comprises in its spiritual sense, the goodness, mercy, loving kindness graciousness, sovereignty, Divinity, power, creative handiwork and omnipotent law giver, in short, the glory of God is the manifestation of the essential parts of Divinity.

Man in his rebellion, looking at the incorruptible God through sinful eyes, turned this glory into a corrupt image of beasts. *Rom 1:23 And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.* This leads us to another aspect to glory, that of incorruptibility. Paul explains that the corruptible will become incorruptible and that the dishonourable will become glorified. *1Co 15:42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: 1Co 15:43 It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.*

The parallel statements give glory and incorruptibility as synonymous and hence also the idea of holiness perfected. Therefore we have suggested two aspects of Glory.

1. The visible splendour and
2. The moral or distinctive excellence of the subject.

To glorify God we must I suggest do two things.

1. Teach His attributes and thereby manifest His glory.
2. Be conformed to His image, whereby we become partakers of His image and glory. We do this through the spirit by seeking to be conformed to His son.

Finally, a question concerning Christ. Did he as the hymn says “Mildly lay His glory by”? In view of the putative nature of our second definition, to lay aside glory would be synonymous with laying aside His Divinity (which through long labour we show He did not do!). *Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

Yet why does Christ call upon the Father to be glorified? *Joh 17:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.*

I think here is the thought of the removal of humiliation and the return to the splendour of God, for in John the moral glory was visible to his children, and for a special season, the transfiguration. They saw the outward glory, the splendour or radiance of His majesty. *Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. Luk 9:32 But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.*

We might say that in the sense of becoming humble, Jesus laid aside His glory, His splendour and countenance for a season, but never did He lay aside the glory of His excellent nature.

*Rev 21:22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. Rev 21:23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Rev 21:24 And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. Rev 21:25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. Rev 21:26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. Rev 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.*

**AMEN**